

SNAPS

A COMIC WEEKLY OF COMIC STORIES BY COMIC AUTHORS.

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No. 22.

NEW YORK, MARCH 7, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.

SHORTY IN LUCK.

BY PETER PAD.



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NEW YORK, MARCH 7, 1900.

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SHORTY IN LUCK.

A Sequel to "Shorty on the Stage; or, Having All Sorts of Luck."

BY PETER PAD.

CHAPTER I.

The readers of No. 5 of SNAPS, entitled "Shorty on the Stage; or, Having All Sorts of Luck," will remember that we left our mischievous and prank-playing little friend, Shorty, taking the train for New York on his return from his racket in the country as a monkey, to find that the minstrel troupe in which he had so long shone as the boss star had departed from Buffalo without him.

"Dat's one keno for dem hamfatters; but dey won't get 'nother racket on dis coon in a hurry. I don't want ter travel wid any sich snide gang," muttered Shorty as he dumped himself into a seat in the corner of the car and looked thoughtfully out of the window.

But his fun-loving propensities would not let him remain quiet long, and before the cars were out of sight of the city he was squinting around to see if there was any chance for some sport.

The seat directly in front of him was occupied by a foppish swell, in a shiny plug hat, kid gloves and an ulster overcoat, who divided his time between stroking his mustache and ogling everybody through an eye-glass, which kept constantly falling from his eye into his lap.

"Shoot me, if 'ere ain't a regular snob!" soliloquized Shorty, and a comical grin spread over his phiz as his eyes rested on this dandified passenger.

Diving down into one of his pockets, he fished out a piece of fine brown twine, and managed, without being noticed, to fasten one end of it to the sleeve of the dandy's overcoat, and the other end to the bell-rope that ran through the cars in such a manner that any movement of the latter's arm would instantly ring the bell signaling the train to stop. Then, quietly sliding from his seat to one on the opposite side, Shorty cunningly awaited the result.

"Tickets, gentlemen!" shouted the conductor, coming in a few minutes later and slamming the door.

The dandy started, dropped his eye-glass, and, in stooping to pick it up, the string attached to his arm tightened, giving the bell-rope a tug; the whistle instantly screamed; the brakeman flew to the brakes, and the train came to a full stop.

"What's the trouble ahead there?" called out the conductor, bouncing out on the platform.

"What's the trouble behind, you mean?" shouted back the engineer, sticking his head out of the cab window.

"What in thunder and lightning did you whistle down brakes for?" screamed the conductor, jumping off the train into a snow-bank up to his knees, and waving his arms around excitedly.

"Give us a rest, will you? What d'you ring the bell for, if you don't want me to stop?"

"Ring fiddlesticks! I never touched your darned bell!"

"That's too thin! I ain't feeding on cobweb soup. You'd better go sling mud at yourself!" exclaimed the engineer angrily.

"And I guess you've got the jimjams, and ain't fit to be engineer of a second-class teapot," replied the conductor, dancing around with anger.

"Fust thing you know I'll engineer you over the ear, if you don't stop your fooling. D'you hear my gentle voice?" retorted the engineer, starting the train with a jerk that nearly dislocated the passengers' spines, and dumped an old farmer, who had got up to get a drink of water, head first into the dandy's lap.

Shorty, who had been shaking himself with laughter over the success of his racket, had taken advantage of the passengers having their heads out of the windows, to slip over, cut the string and resume his seat before the wrathful conductor put his face in the door.

"I bet dat conductor of ours would make a tip-top cork for a cologne bottle," remarked Shorty, as the conductor came along punching the tickets and stamping the snow off his feet.

"What's the reason I would?" he demanded gruffly.

"Cause yer sich a bully good stopper."

"I don't want any of your sass, for I ain't in the humor to stand it," growled the conductor, as the people in the car commenced laughing.

"Oh, yer don't; well, I hear we run over something, anyhow."

"Then you heard just wrong, for we didn't."

"Why, a feller skinned thro' here a minute ago, and said we'd run over six miles since we'd left the depot," said Shorty, innocently.

"Well, that fellow and you must have been dining off razor straps, for you're both too smart to live long."

"Does der smart blokes allus croak young?"

"Yes."

"Den I guess you're safe ter live till der nex' Centenzul show," said Shorty, comically.

"And I guess I've had enough of your chin-music," growled the conductor, moving away.

"Ta-ta! Drop me a postal card when yer want ter see me," said Shorty, and the passengers smiled aloud again.

"I'll make some of you gigglers grin the other side of your mouths, first thng you know," snarled the conductor, turning back and threatening a tall, good-looking, handsomely-dressed young fellow in the seat behind Shorty, who had been laughing merrily at the latter's jokes.

"I s'pose you wouldn't punch anything bigger and stronger than a car ticket, would you?" asked the young man.

"Wouldn't I? I guess you don't know who you're talking to," said the other savagely.

"Shah of Persia, mebbe," replied the young man.

"Grand Duke, de ticket puncher," chimed in Shorty.

"Red Cloud on the warpath," suggested the young man.

"Moses der bull rusher, fightin' flies," chirped Shorty.

"I'm the conductor of this train, and I'm going to fire you two smarties off so quick it'll make your heads swim."

"Rip, slam, bang, and I'll bet you won't," replied the young man.

"Guess you're only coddin', ole pie crust," exclaimed Shorty.

"I'll slam bang you!" yelled the conductor, grabbing at the young man, and trying to pull him out of his seat.

"Here's something you forgot behind you!" shouted Shorty, as he unfastened a large shawl-pin from his coat, leaned over and jabbed it several times under the conductor's coat-tails.

"Ouch! ow-ow-ow! Lordy! fire and brimstone! I'm stabbed—I'm stabbed!" yelled the conductor, letting go of his victim and dancing around the car with his hands on the wounded spot.

"Get off my foot, you dawnd wretch!" screamed the dandy, pushing the conductor away from him.

"Who's a wretch, you monkey you?"

"You aw bwute."

"I'm a brute, am I?" shrieked the now thoroughly infuriated conductor, smashing the dandy's plug hat over his eyes, and striking out right and left.

The brakeman hurried in, and managed after a while to quiet him down and lead him off into the baggage car to cool off, and put some sticking plaster on his bruises.

"He's waltzing away as mad as if he had a whole hive of bumblebees in his pants' pocket," said the young man, laughingly to Shorty.

"You bet, he's mad enough to light firecrackers by."

"By Jingo! little one, you've done me a good, square turn, an' one I won't forget in a hurry, when you spurred him up behind, for the old tub was crowdin' me kinder close."

"Dat's all right, sport. I guess der old bloat's got 'nuff of us dis time," said Shorty.

"You did it like a trump. Seems to me's if I'd seen you

somewhere's before," remarked the young man, exchanging his seat for one alongside of Shorty.

"Fore the footlights, mebbe."

"Shouldn't wonder. What's your name, if it's a fair question?"

"Shorty—for short."

"Put it there, old boy," exclaimed the young man, putting out his hand and shaking Shorty's warmly. "And are you the famous Shorty that gave the minstrel troupe such a racket by putting porous plasters on their chairs?"

"Der same," said Shorty, laughing at the recollection of the scene.

"And sent old Beaty, the cop, up to the station-house with a box of stones?"

"I'm der coon."

"Which way are you drifting now? I heard the San Franciscoes had gone the other way."

"Well, you see, I've shook dat gang for good, dey couldn't stan' a racket, so I've pulled out from 'em," replied Shorty.

"Why don't you pitch in, little one, an' start a rip stavin' opposition troupe of your own? Wouldn't it pay?"

"You bet, it'd pay big, but it takes a feller ter have der spondulics to start dese things."

"Oh, dat's the sticker, is it? Well, what do you say, Shorty, old fellow, to tacklin' a first-class troupe as manager and best card on the bills, an' starrin' it all over. I feel just like slab-bangin' it around this country and Europe on a bully old hurra of a tour with you. I've seen you on the boards an' know you're a hull team, an' a cross-eyed, spotted dorg under the wagon at the biz. So all you've got to do is to say the word. I'll stick up all the sugar you want to rig you out in hummin' style, an' we'll just have one of the hunkiest old cruises together ever hatched, or my name's not Ned Shanks," proposed his new-found friend.

"Le's understand' dis thing," said Shorty. "I'm ter boss der gang?"

"Korrect."

"Yer ter let me pick out my own crowd?"

"Korrect again."

"An' you'll rig 'em out fuss-class?"

"Still korrect."

"Star it here, there an' everywhere, hey?"

"Once more korrect."

"Both in this country and Europe?"

"Eggs-zactly."

"How're yer fixed for der stamps?"

"You just bet I've got stacks of them," said Ned Shanks.

"An' yer willin' ter flop 'em out ter make dis show get up an' bile?"

"You're shoutin' wisdom dis time."

"Dis huckleberry's ter show hisself in somefin' every night, I suppose?"

"That's what's the matter."

"An' you'll come along for a racket?"

"Yee up."

"Den I'm wid yer, pard, an' we'll jest scare up der red-hottest ole gang of burnt cokers dat ever cracked der bones or slammed der sheepskin. You bet we'll make dat oder crowd of hamfatters look sick afore we're thro' wid 'em," said Shorty, and they shook hands heartily on their partnership.

"Where d'you propose scoopin' in your company, Shorty?" asked Shanks, after a moment's pause.

"I'll rake dem up 'f I have to go to 'Frisco," said Shorty in a confident manner.

"Goin' to have any of the old gang in this new crowd?"

"Nary a bloke."

"I s'pose New York's our best lay-out?" said Shanks.

"You bet; we'll hang up at some stunnin' hash-house, an' den advertise in der papers," explained Shorty.

"Fire away, that's the racket for me," replied his friend, and the matter was looked upon as settled.

The rest of their journey to the metropolis proved uneventful. Shorty and Ned Shanks chatted over their future arrangements and mapped out a good old time till the train rolled into the depot at New York.

Leaving the cars they were immediately besieged by a drove of shouting, jostling, hauling, mauling, swearing hackmen.

"This way, jintlemen!" exclaimed a brawny, red-nosed, whisky-smelling Irishman, catching Shanks by the arm.

"Sure, here's Dennis McCarthy's hack right forninst you."

"Better slide off on your ear an' put a revenue stamp over your mouth, or some of the detectives will be snatchin' you bald-headed for a perambulating, crooked whisky distillery," said Ned, pushing him off.

"Don't you talk mid dose loafers und sheets, you shust come into mein leedle hack, und I'll dake you to the Atlantic Garten or any blace you want to go," said a Teutonic aspirant, button-holeing Shorty, and nearly knocking him down with the smell of limburger cheese.

"Paddle off, ole Sauer Kraut; yer smell's if somethin' had crawled down yer an' died. Better go wash your insides out with a bottle of cologne," said Shorty, humorously.

"Dis way, gem'men, shuah dis darky's ole mammy used to nuss George Washington; I 'clare to goodness dat's so," said a woolly-headed moke, bustling to the front.

"I vote for George Washington's nuss," laughed Shorty, and they followed him to a hack drawn by a broken-eared, tricky-looking pair of nags.

"Dose plugs of your'n won't run away, will dey, uncle?" asked Shorty.

"Golly, no, sah; dose hosses got less foolishness dan colts, an' knows a heap better dan to do dat."

"Do dey kick?"

"Praise de lam! No, boss; dey wouldn't kick at a multiplication table, or a life 'surance man. Whar shall I tote you to, sah?" asked Sambo, as he closed the carriage door and mounted the box.

"Fifth Avenue Hotel, and make dem boneyards of yers git up and crawl," said Shorty.

They had only been driven a few blocks, when Shorty, who had been fastening the shawl-pin onto the end of his cane, quietly opened the front window of the hack, and sticking his cane out, managed to give one of the nags a sharp prod, without being noticed.

"Whoa, dere, you hoss—don't yer fool wid dis nigger—you heah?" exclaimed Sambo, as the horse suddenly dropped his head and let fly with his heels.

Shorty watched his chance, and a few minutes later prodded them both again. He could do this easily without attracting attention, owing to the dashboard entirely hiding him from the driver's view.

This time there was a sudden stoppage of the hack, and a fearful clattering of heels against the front of the vehicle, that threatened to reduce it to fire wood.

"Dat'll do, dat'll do, you four-legged debble dat you is. I'ze gwine ter jess lam yer foah dis carryin' on, suah," yelled Sambo, as he climbed up on top of the hack, to keep from being kicked on the shins, nor could he be persuaded to descend. In this comical manner they drove up to the entrance of the hotel, to the great amusement of the guests, who were looking out of the windows.

The next day Shorty and his chum, Shanks, devoted to business; driving down in the morning to the Clipper and daily paper offices, Shorty inserted the following advertisement:

WANTED—A full minstrel company for a traveling season of nine months. Must be A No. 1 at the business. To such will be offered most liberal inducements. Address immediately,
SHORTY, Box No. 40, Clipper Office.

From there they made the rounds of the different theatrical agencies, inspecting their list of professionals wishing en-

gagements, and left word for a few first-class artists to call upon them.

Returning to the hotel, they put themselves outside of a royal old dinner, lit their cigars and strolled down Broadway. Calling into a swell tailor's, they left their measures for a stunning outfit, to be delivered at the hotel the following day.

"Now, les' take a scoot downtown an' have a sorter look at some slashin' ole properties," suggested Shorty, hailing a hack, and they were soon driven to one of the largest importers and manufacturers of theatrical and minstrel goods in the city, where our little friend gladdened the heart of the proprietor by the liberality of his order.

In the evening they scooped in a theatre, and after a racket around the city, returned to the hotel and retired for the night.

The second morning brought Shorty half a bushel of applications for positions in the new company. These he read carefully, selected such as he thought possessed the requisite amount of talent, and appointed an hour on the day following for a morning rehearsal, in costume, at the Theatre Comique.

The next day Shorty, attired in a full suit of swell clothes, with a shiny plug hat and a gold-headed cane, strutted into the theatre at the hour named, and found a motley crowd of professionals and amateur aspirants awaiting his inspection and examination. Among the former he was surprised to perceive Charley Pettengill, of the old troupe, who had been sent down by the other crowd to spot how Shorty was getting on, and report to them.

"Now, den, Sambo, what's yer best grip?" asked Shorty, of an awkward-looking specimen of an amateur, who, dressed in a half-minstrel, half-jockey rig, was staring around him open-mouthed.

"I'se come in from de country, boss, to see 'bout being yer end man."

"Well, les' see yer shake yerself."

"I ain't got the ager."

"You chatter 'nuff to hev it."

"Dat's der fault of my mouf, boss."

"Well, open it den, an' lemme hear yer squeal," said Shorty. "I didn't apply for to be a pig, so I can't squeal."

"Haven't yer got er voice?"

"Yaas, I'se got a voice like a he owl, my old dad used ter say."

"Toot up, den."

"Somfin' lively, I s'pose?"

"You bet."

"How's dis, den:

"Dar was dree crows
Sat on a tree,
As black as ever
Crows could—"

"Dat'll do, Sambo, you can get," said Shorty, sticking his fingers in his ears.

"Get how?" inquired the applicant for minstrel honors.

"Climb."

"I ain't a climber, boss; I'se a singer."

"Mosey."

"Who's he?"

"Dust out," said Shorty.

"Well, give us a broom, and I'll tidy up."

"One—two—three, bounce!" exclaimed Shorty, grabbing him by the slack of the breeches and the back of the neck, running him out of the door and shooting him down a flight of stairs.

"Whar d'you figger in der show?" asked Shorty next of a big, pot-bellied, plantation-looking moke, who had been looking stupidly on.

"I'll fit mos' anywhere, jedge; but if you want to see me come out strong, gimme de bones and lemme warble."

"Speel, den," said Shorty, leaning back on his cane and assuming a critical air.

"Well, how's this suit you, jedge?" asked the applicant, seating himself on a stool, rattling the bones, and singing in a voice that would raise the shingles off a roof.

"If you want me to sing and dance in your fly-by-night show, and you'll pay me handsomely, I don't mind if I go. But I want the 'ghost to walk' in advance; you may laugh, but I've tried. And you'll find that I'm a square bloat, and neither 'ham' or 'snide.'"

"As dis ain't goin' ter be any fly-by-night show, yer can skip," said Shorty.

"Don't want me, then?"

"Nix want; light out."

"Don't suit you, it 'pears?"

"No, so wipe off yer chin an' skedaddle."

"I'd jest as leave work cheap, jedge."

"Button up yer ulster an' paddle off," advised Shorty.

"Mebbe you'd like to see me shuffle?"

"Shuffle out of 'ere."

"You ought to see me and my lame brother, Ike, pitching quoits. Don't you want something of that kind in your show?"

"One—two—three, bounce!" said Shorty, as he fired the applicant out, and listened to him go bumping down the stairs.

"Nex'," he said, coming back onto the stage.

"Dat's not my name, boss, but I'll answer for luck," said a bright, light-built, gayly-togged young fellow, stepping to the front.

"Dat's more like it; I'll bet yer ain't none of dem duffers. What's yer best snap?" asked Shorty, looking admiringly at the new applicant, who stood before him cool and collected, and with that air of ease and confidence only acquired by those who have been before the footlights for some time.

"Oh, I'm bigger dan a government jackass at the song and danc biz."

"Slide in, den," said Shorty.

"You may have heard of Dionisius Snodgrass,
The India-rubber darky from the South;
He could turn a double flip-flap on his eyebrow.
Or run his head and heels way down his mouth.
You may all think he's been misrepresented,
Don't be deceived, he stands before you now;
So, if you wish to doubt the words I've told you,
Why, I'll do de old time essence on my brow.

Others have to take a seat

When they see that I'm so neat;
And say that I'm the best they ever met,
For I'm Dionisius Snodgrass from Callina,
And something on the song and dance, you bet."

"How'll that suit you, little one? I knows another verse of it," said the song and dance man, coming around with an artistic twirl.

"Dat's solid as der Brooklyn Bridge. Spit out t'other verse," said Shorty.

"I've seen Jim Crow and Nicodemus Johnson,
And old Black Joe along with Pompey Moore;
I met them down upon the old plantation,
When we'd gather all upon the kitchen floor.
They played the tambourine, the bones and banjo,
And hill and dale re-echoed with their joy;
But when it came to acrobatic dancing,
They had to yield the palm unto this boy."

"You'll do, buckshot; drop up ter der Fifth Avener Hotel to-night, an' sign der papers, for sta'?" said Shorty.

"I'll be on hand," said the other, going out through the scenes.

Shorty devoted the next two hours to the examination of applicants, who kept putting in an appearance, and after bouncing a small regiment of duffers, wound up that evening by securing a red-hot, rustling old crowd.

CHAPTER II.

Shorty found himself busier than a hive of bees for the first few days after engaging his company. There was a place of amusement to be secured, new scenery to be painted, posters to be struck off, advertisements to be given out, a programme to be selected, rehearsals to be held, and a name to be chosen, and the quotation of "the last to be first" held good in this instance, for the next morning, as they were seated in the smoking-room of the hotel, talking over their programme for the day, Shanks suddenly inquired:

"By the way, Shorty, how're you goin' to call that slam bang crowd of yours?"

"You bet, pard, dat most of that gang'll come quick 'nuff 'thout callin', 'specially 'bout chuck time an' pay day," replied Shorty, blowing a smoke wreath in the air.

"Sugar! I mean how're you goin' to christen 'em?"

"Dere mammies and daddies looked out for all dat, I guess."

"Hang it, Shorty, you know what I mean," laughed Ned, punching him in the ribs with his cane. "What're they go to be known by?"

"By der size of dere feet, der beauty of dere complex o s an' der willingness ter accept a treat."

"You be blowed! How're you goin' to put 'em down on the bills?" asked Ned, tossing his half-smoked cigar out of the window, much to the disgust of a foppish young fellow, who caught it on the tip of his nose.

"Pay as we go—won't run up any."

"I mean the posters."

"Oh, yer want ter be posted?"

"Yes, without being stuck up or vain."

"Well, yer would have ter be purty sharp at fencing, or you'd get pasted in der back."

"Then I'd get my back up and paste him in the ear," laughed Ned.

"Dat might do on de Erie road, but 'twouldn't pan out worth a cent on der route we're goin' to strike," replied Shorty.

"But, in short, about this name for the company?"

"Shorty—not Short."

"Fiddle-dee-dee, if 'twill suit you," said Ned.

"No, a fiddle wouldn't suit me. Banjo's my holt."

"Come, name the gang."

"Keep yer shirt on for a minute, an' I'll show yer how we'll name 'em," said Shorty, tearing a sheet of paper into six slips, and handing three to his chum. "Scratch down three names on dose papers, an' I'll do der same on dese."

"All right; here you are, little one," said Ned a moment later.

"Chuck 'em all in dis stove pipe hat of mine. Now, here's luck to der"—Shorty paused, put his hand into the hat, drew out a slip, opened it and read aloud—"New York Minstrels."

"Rip, slam, bang and three times three and a tiger to the new company!" exclaimed Shanks.

"Der child is born, an' its name is New York Minstrels, an' if it only takes arter its namesake, dere will be dead loads of fun always ter be had," said Shorty.

"Let's drink to his prosperity in some sparkling champagne," suggested Ned, springing up.

"I'm wid yer," said Shorty, flicking the white ashes from his cigar and touching an immense dog under the tail, that was being led around by a pompous old gentleman.

Then ensued a scene of the wildest confusion; the dog gave a frightful, ear-splitting yelp, plunged madly forward, scooped a mouthful out of a colored waiter's leg, and brought the old gentleman down on his knees with a force that shook his false teeth out on the floor. The waiter howled and danced around on one foot, and the old gentleman got up, swore like a madman, and pulled on the chain; but the dog braced his feet, reared back and barked savagely, then he came forward abruptly, and the old gentleman turned a back somersault, and kicked a bootblack under the ear, while the dog amused him-

self by tasting everybody that his chain would permit him to reach.

Some of the people whose legs he had sampled tried to revenge themselves by kicking a hole in the brute, but it was remarked that they never tried it twice, but left immediately after the attempt, with anger in their faces, and fresh teeth holes in their pantaloons.

Shorty, who had scrambled up on top of a table after starting the racket, was an amused spectator of the scene, and kept up a running fire of jokes and suggestions, which, however, the spectators failed to appreciate, their whole minds, energies and activity being concentrated upon keeping out of the way of the snapping cur.

"Ouch! Lordy! Hang your darned dog, he's eaten a pound off my leg!" screamed a fat, bald-headed man, crawling out from under the table, where he had hid, and hitting a quiet, inoffensive little looker-on a blow on the nose, under the impression he was the owner of the dog.

"What in Dutch blazes are you hitting me for?" screamed the little man, wiping the blood from his nose, rolling up his sleeves and pitching into his bald-headed antagonist.

"Oh, mister, don't yer want ter buy a dog?" shouted Shorty, dancing a breakdown on the table.

"I wish he'd bite your ugly head off, you infernal little runt!" exclaimed a thin-legged youth, as he climbed up on a chair and examined his bitten calves.

"One puppy allus growls an' bites 'nuther un, spider legs," replied Shorty.

"Whoop! Blue blazes! take him off! take him off!" bawled a fresh victim, kicking out as fast and wickedly as a trick mule in a circus.

"Whoa, snort! Ain't he a beauty?" said Shorty, as the brute rushed between another man's legs and tumbled him head first into a spittoon, wheeled about, carried away a large portion of a gentleman's pantaloons and wound up by tangling a couple more up with his chain and then biting them at his leisure.

"Great caterpillers! Won't somebody cut me open!" exclaimed the owner of the dog, struggling to pick up his false teeth, hold on his hat, pull away the dog, and find out who was kicking him behind all at once.

"Ki-yi! ki-yi! ki-yudle! 'ere's a purty ring-tailed, roarin' pet fur sum feller ter take home ter his gal," called out Shorty, bouncing off the table, poking the snapping dog in the ribs with his cane, and with a "day-day, gem'men," he swaggered out, followed by Shanks, and made his way to the bar-room, where they drank to the success of the "New York Minstrels" in foaming glasses of sparkling iced champagne. Then lighting fresh cigars, they sauntered down Broadway, where they attracted no end of attention by the difference in their size, Ned Shanks being fully six feet tall, while our hero, Shorty, was but little more than half of that.

"Hi, cully, luk at de Si'mese twins!" shouted a newsboy.

"Cheese it, de little one's Charley Ross growed up, an' de big one's de Gran' Juke 'Lexis!" yelped another.

"Dis is a heap too much of a free lunch exercition ter suit dis hair-pin. Les' bounce a coach," suggested Shorty, and they hailed a passing hack, and drove down to the different newspaper offices, left their advertisements, made arrangements for their show-bill printing, and devoted the rest of the day to looking up a place of amusement, in which to hold their opening performance.

That evening Shorty and his friend retired early, but were kept awake the biggest part of the night by the squalling of a baby in the next room, which was occupied by a ponderous Teutonic Philadelphia alderman and his family.

"Confound that little cub, I wish it was back in Philadelphia, Germany, or heaven," remarked Shanks, on being woken up for the twentieth time. Shorty, are you 'wake?"

"You bet; why, dat blubberin' snoozer in dere would wake a ten days old corpse."

"There ain't much deaf and dumby 'bout 'im," said Shanks.

"Can't you put up a racket on the old sausage-eater, an' hyst 'im out of 'ere?"

"Jess hold yer breath till ter-morrow, an' fi don't put up a job on Dutchy dat'll make 'im waltz back ter Filadelpher on his ear yer can pick me up for a butter-fingered muff," replied Shorty, burying his head in the pillows.

"Bully for you, Shorty! Give 'im the grand Yankee Doodle bounce," muttered his chum drowsily, and the sleepy god slipped in and pulled down their eyelids.

The next morning Shorty and his friend were standing in the office of the hotel, before starting out for a ramble, when the alderman strutted in, puffed out like an overgrown toad with his own importance, and approaching the clerk, said:

"Mine fren, I expect some peoples to call mit somedings I pought. Ven dey comes shoost make dem go ride oup to mine room, for sta?"

"Very good, sir."

"I subbose you don't ofden haf von alterman poarding at dis hodel?" he inquired loftily.

"It's a great honor, I'm sure, and we're awfully thankful," said the clerk sarcastically, winking at Shorty. "Is there anything that we can do for your honor?"

"Vell, you mide shust dell der cook dat I vhat her to take a dumble, and not cook any more of dem parley voo dishes for dinner, put to shust poil some goot blood budding und saur kraut for der beoples."

"It shall be attended to."

He was rolling away, when Shorty tackled him, and cocking his eye up comically, said:

"Is yer Mister Hans Von Spreeken, der great Filadelpher alderman?"

"Dot ish my name, leedle feller, und I bees broad of it," replied the alderman, halting, and looking down at him with an air of immense superiority.

"An' you're de ham dat roosts in room Number 27?"

"Yah, me und mine vrou und paby occupies dot room."

"Nice baby, dat; got a purty voice," codded Shorty.

"Yes, dot paby is der peaudifullest leedle ding ever vas. Everypody dalks mit me und says he is shoost der image of me."

"I'll tell yer what'd be a bully good thing ter do wid 'im."

"Vhat ish dot, mine fren?"

"Why, let his ears grow and make a Dutch jackass out of 'im—he's got der voice already," said Shorty, and he walked off amidst the shouts of laughter of the bystanders, who had been listening to the conversation, leaving the alderman the picture of horrified amazement and indignation.

"If that old beer-tub ain't got more gall than a bull-dozin' alligator. You'd think he was a Thanksgivin' turkey to see him strut 'round," laughed Shanks, overtaking his friend.

"Jest freeze fast to yerself, pard, an' keep yer eyes peeled for a racket dat'll make 'em get up an' howl," said Shorty, and hailing a stage, they rode down town to the Astor House, from where Shorty wrote off and dispatched a boy to the different evening newspapers, with the following advertisement:

"WANTED IMMEDIATELY—Half a dozen first-class monkeys, for which a liberal price will be paid. Those accustomed to the organ-grinding profession preferred.

"Inquire for,

HANS VON SPRECKEN,

"Fifth Avenue Hotel."

"Dere, if dat don't fetch 'im yer can call me a marine," said Shorty, as the boy dusted away.

"You've struck the bulls-eye this time, chum. Great beeswax! but won't old sassingers be hoppin'?" exclaimed Shanks, tumbling to Shorty's little game, and smelling heaps of fun ahead.

After transacting some business and completing their arrangements for an opening performance at a Broadway theatre they strolled slowly up town, dropping in at a billiard hall. They knocked the balls around for an hour or so, much

to the amusement of some young plums that were playing at another table, as Shorty's head hardly reached above the cushionion.

"He ought to have a pair of stilts," remarked one of them finally, thinking he was picking up a flat.

"I don't want 'em no wuss than yer do a new set of brains; those yer got seems purty well played out," retorted Shorty promptly.

"Somebody ought to put a plaster on him and try and draw him out," suggested a second.

"If der aldermen and common scoundrels knowed yer was floatin' 'round loose, dey'd charter a pile-driver, drive yer inter der mud up ter yer neck, leave yer ears stickin' out ter tie ships ter, an' save yer folks from payin' yer funeral expenses," answered Shorty, as he chalked his cue after scoring a run of twenty.

"Whew, what a little porcupine!" said the first speaker.

"You'd better chalk yer head an' stand yerself up in der rack for a cue; it's a better biz dan tater peelin' for a five cent hash-house," replied Shorty, and as the other fellow was tall and thin, this raised a roar of laughter at his expense.

"Tom Thumb's grandaddy on his muscle," remarked the other speaker.

"You would have ter skip up to der Central Park an' look in der monkey's cage ter find yer grandaddy, though dere's a strong famerly resemblance 'tween yer," said Shorty, and the lookers-on laughed again and clapped their hands, while the other crowd, feeling they had stirred up a hornet's nest, stuck up their cues and slunk away.

After playing another game, Shorty and his friend Shanks went out, and hailing a stage, rode up to the hotel and went up to their room to fix up a little before supper.

They had not been in their room over ten minutes when they heard somebody rap at the alderman's door, and heard him demand:

"Who ish dere?"

"It is me, monsieur, wiz ze nicest, jolliest little monkey for you," answered a voice outside, and Shorty and Shanks flew to their door, and peeping out discovered a little Frenchman holding a monkey in his arms.

"Dot ish nein for me, go rite oud der house," said the alderman, opening the door and getting very red in the face.

"Monsieur avez vous ze name Hans Von Sprecken?" asked the Frenchman politely.

"Yaw, dat ish my name."

Then the Frenchman bowed, smiled, shrugged his shoulders, set down his monkey and was making him go through his performance, when the alderman slammed the door shut in his face, and could be heard jawing and storming around the room.

Just then there was another rap, and in answer to the alderman's bell a voice was heard:

"Plaze, sur, cum out here an' take your pick of these two monkeys."

"Himmel donner wetter! dis ish vonderful!"

"Come, hustle yourself along 'ere, old Spreckenkrout, or whatever your name is, an' take a squint at my ring-tailed monkey," said another voice.

"Mine Gott in himmel! Have I gone crazy mit mine brains?" said the alderman, fuming and frothing around the room.

"Where's dat old snoozer, Speckled Trout, that wants to buy a monkey?" bawled another one, coming up.

"Fetch him out."

Then the alderman threw open the door and found himself face to face with a score of dirty, lubberly organ-grinders, each armed with a chattering, grinning monkey.

"You retches und schamps——"

"I was here fust, sir; let me show you my monkey," yelled one.

"Mine's a bob-tailed one," screamed another.

"Zis pretty zittle one can dance and jump," said an old

crone, shoving an immense monkey in a red cap and soldier jacket into the alderman's arms.

"By tam! you nein go ride out, I'll call der bolice und makes droubles mit you."

"Oh, cheese it, Dutchy. We don't want any speech."

"How much are you going to give us for our monkeys?"

"Feel this old monkey, and see how fat he is."

"Just look at this little beauty with pink eyes."

"Ere's der one yer want, ole swell head," said a short-haired rough, elbowing his way to the front and hauling an enormous, mangy, scarred and devilish-looking baboon after him by a chain.

Then the alderman got up and tried to explain that he didn't want any monkeys; but, between his excitement and badly broken English, the crowd, which now filled the hall and half way down the staircase, could not understand him, and kept putting their monkeys into his room to exhibit till the floor was covered with them; and his wife, with the squalling baby in her arms, was forced to climb up on top of the bureau to prevent being overrun by them.

"You shwindlers, und schamps, und loafers, und plack-guards, und wredches, if you don't schtep out I'll budt a head mit you und hoostle you avay miday soon quick," threatened the now frantic alderman, kicking madly and wildly at the monkeys that were dancing around him, climbing up his legs, grinning at him from the chairs, turning somersaults in his bed, jabbering at him from the mantel-piece, hanging on to his coat-tails, swinging from the chandeliers and window-curtains, and upsetting things on the table and washstand.

"Don't yer kick my monkey, old limburger!" roared one of the crowd at the door.

"Bad cess to ye for an ill-mannered Dutchman, to hurt a poor widow's little monkey," screamed an old woman, trying to scratch his face.

"I'll kick ther hull top of yer head off 'f you don't shake me out a tanner, yer old Belzebub, dere," said the owner of the baboon, who was engaged at that moment in shaking the alderman's gold watch, which he had picked up off the table.

The alderman mounted a chair and tried to be heard, but the chattering and jabbering of the monkeys, the cries of his baby, the prayers of his wife, and the shouts of the people way down in the lower part of the hall, who were struggling to get forward in order to make a sale of their monkeys, which they carried, drowned his voice so that not a single word could be heard.

"Give me back my monkey, if you don't want him."

"Here's a spotted one, sur."

"Pass this one up for the gentleman to see."

"Sure, it's Mike Muldooney that's got the baste to suit yer honor."

"Why don't you pay us for our monkeys and let us go?"

"Vill ze gentilhomme condescend to let his eyes rest on my Italian monkey?"

"Taren-an-ouns! Here's a bald-headed monkey from Tipperary."

"'F you don't pass that monkey of mine out to me, I'll come in and kick the Dutch stuffing out of you."

"What're you tryin' ter give us? Wind puddin', hey?"

"Do you want us to trust yer for the monkeys?"

In vain the alderman fumed, swore, pleaded, beseeched, begged, scolded, raved, shouted, gesticulated, jawed and roared, the crowd taunted, jostled and crowded toward him till he finally slammed the door shut, locked it and opening the front window, commenced tossing the jabbering, long-tailed monkeys out on the sidewalk, to the astonishment of the passers-by, and the infinite amusement of the guests of the hotel, who had smelt a rat and were on the lookout.

Two policemen had to be summoned, and spent half an hour clearing the passage of the enraged owners of the monkeys, who departed swearing eternal vengeance on Alderman Hans Von Sprecken, and an hour later that wrathful personage had packed his things, shook the dust of New York off his feet,

and was rushing back to the city of Quakers as fast as the owl train of the Pennsylvania Central would carry him.

Shorty and Shanks, who during the hubbub had been writhing and rolling around their room with pillows before their mouths to keep their laughter from being heard, made their appearance shortly after his departure, and the fact that the former was the originator of the racket they had just witnessed getting wind, our little hero found himself the observed of all observers.

The next morning's sun looked down upon the fences and bill-boards of the old city glittering and gay as rainbows, with the posters of the New York Minstrels, while the papers teemed with columns of double-headed advertisements, setting forth the strength and talent of the new troupe; and the "Herald" and all the other papers, getting hold of Shorty's monkey racket, published it in full, so that when the curtain went up on the opening performance, Shorty found the house jammed, and not even standing room could be had.

The performance was a success in every sense of the word. The programme was one which had been especially selected by Shorty. The songs, acts, and jokes were all of the freshest of the fresh, and were received with shouts of laughter and thunders of applause. Some of the old San Francisco gang, who had taken up prominent positions through the house, so as to be able to hiss any shortcoming or failure that might occur, turned green with envy as they saw the new company storm the hearts and affections of their audience at a single bound, and occupy the place they had once held.

But the climax was reached when Shorty bounded upon the stage in his character of a monkey. His late monkey racket came vividly to the minds of his audience, and his reception was more than enthusiastic—it was an ovation, and when he had seized his banjo and, perching himself upon the back of a chair, commenced:

"Oh, my name is Sassy Sam,
An' I'se no alderman."

his audience shouted and applauded themselves hoarse.

Act followed act with perfect smoothness, and nearly all the leading performers were called before the curtain to receive their well-earned applause.

Taken altogether, the opening night of the "New York Minstrels" was a brilliant one; and, when the curtain descended for the last time that evening, it left the company firmly planted on the top rung of the ladder of minstrelsy.

"Rip, slam, bang! Shorty, old pard, let me congratulate you!" exclaimed Ned Shanks, rushing into his dressing-room and grabbing him by the hand.

"Well, I sorter guess we're all hunk. Golly! what a house we had!"

"Wasn't room for a baby mosquito," replied Shanks; "that monkey racket up at the hotel's what made the hit."

"Well, der gang all done jest bully; dere wasn't a muff or duffer 'mongst 'em. Lordy, won't dem San Francisco hamfatters get up on der ear an' howl when dey see dis ole crowd of ours go a snortin' ter der front," laughed Shorty, and having paid a visit to the box-office and learned the amount taken in, which was over double what they had expected to realize, Shorty and Shanks started off up to their hotel.

CHAPTER III.

The morning following the opening performance of the New York Minstrel troupe, in which they had so completely carried the play-going public of New York by storm, the daily papers of the metropolis blazed out with glowing accounts and flattering criticisms of the show, and there is no doubt but crowded houses and enthusiastic audiences would have greeted them nightly had they remained to the end of the season; this,

however, was impossible, as Shorty had made arrangements and billed the city, through his advance agent, for their appearance in Philadelphia during the ensuing week.

"Well, Shorty, old boy, how do you pan out this morning?" inquired Shanks, the following morning, as they were dressing themselves.

"Hunkydory, on a half shell," replied Shorty, as he ducked his head into a basin of water.

"I was 'fraid you wouldn't snooze any, 'cause you didn't have that Dutch baby to sing you to sleep."

"I wonder if der alderman's got suited in a monkey yet?" laughed Shorty.

"You bet your high old muckey-muck that he won't have the cheek to look a monkey in the face for the next ten years solid."

"Cheek, why, dat ole snoozer's got cheek 'nuff ter make a roof for a hen-house," replied Shorty.

"An' he'll have ter drown dat Dutch baby of his if he ain't goin' ter look a monkey in der face."

"Oh, give us a rest, pard," chuckled Shanks. "By the way, when do you propose to steer out of here?"

"We'll slide off on our ears to-night for Philamerclink."

"Bully for that!"

"I s'pect der alderman'll give us a reception at his club," said Shorty, leading the way down stairs.

"I guess he'll give you a reception with a hickory club, if he catches you."

Entering the dining-room of the hotel, they seated themselves at one of the tables, ordered breakfast, and were looking over the complimentary notices of the show in different journals, when a bride and groom, fresh from the country, and passing through the city on their honeymoon, entered and seated themselves at the next table.

"Much 'bliged, mister, but I sorter reckon Jerusha an' I won't read nothin' till after we get some vittles into us," remarked the groom to the waiter, who handed him a bill of fare.

"This is a menu for breakfast, sir," said the waiter politely, while Shorty, who had been watching them over the top of his paper, dodged down behind it and grinned.

"Du tell; wal I guess I won't have any of it to-day anyhow; it looks too much like paper for me to chaw on."

"It's not to eat, sir, it is the bill of fare for you to look over and select your dishes."

"Wall, you tell Bill Fair that Jerusha an' I ain't a bit stuck up or 'tickular 'bout the dishes. You can fetch us our grub on plates, if you're short of crockery in the kitchen."

"What shall I bring you, sir?" asked the waiter, giving up all further attempt to make him understand the bill of fare.

"Mine's slap-jacks an' 'lasses, to commence with."

"Slap what, sir?"

"Slap-jacks, an' tote 'em in soon as you can, for Jerusha an' I feel kinder grub-struck."

"I'm afraid we haven't got them on the bill of fare," remarked the waiter.

"Wall, mister, you just tell Billy Fair that Gamaliel Jones of Hopperville, says fur him to send him out some corn dodgers an' fixins for two empty critters to pile into 'em," he remarked to the waiter, then turning to his wife as the waiter departed, he added: "I'll be dog-goned, Rushy, if this been't the fust hotel ever I struck where they didn't keep slap-jacks."

The waiter returned in a few moments with a nicely-served breakfast for two, which he set before them and departed, and the pair set to work with an appetite that proved he had not exaggerated when he described himself and wife as empty.

Shorty and Shanks, who had overheard the conversation, had been shaking themselves with suppressed laughter, and the former had been thinking how he could have a racket at their expense, when an opportunity suddenly presented itself.

"I wonder, Rushy, which of these gimcrack bottles has got the termater catchup in?" inquired the groom, after a few moments.

"Laws, Gammy! how d'you 'spect I know?" answered his wife.

"Won't yer try some of dis, squire?" asked Shorty, snatching up a bottle of cayenne sauce and handing it to him.

"Much 'bliged. I don't keer 'fi do," said the groom. "I'm the all firedest feller arter termater sauce ever was."

"Dat ain't exactly termater, but it's a red-hot ole sauce; jest taste it," observed Shorty.

The groom drew the cork out with his thumb-nail, and tilting the bottle up to his lips swallowed a couple of good mouthfuls in rapid succession, and the next minute his wife was surprised to see him drop the bottle, spring wildly from the table and commence prancing around the floor.

"Oh, Gammy, dear, what is the matter?" she exclaimed, as she saw him jump over a table, kick over a chair and paw the air wildly with his arms.

"Jump-ing Ge-hos-ophat!" he yelled, after draining half a dozen tumblers of water.

"Oh, Gammy, tell your own little wife——"

But the words died on her lips as she saw him peel off his best coat, dance on it, and then glare around with bloodshot eyes, while he kept exclaiming:

"Where is he? Show him to me?"

"Please be quiet, sir," said a waiter.

"Quiet the devil, man. I'd like to see you be quiet with a belly full of red-hot fire!" he exclaimed, sucking in a great mouthful of air.

"Oh, Gamaliel, you swared," said his wife, who concluded he had gone crazy.

"Oh, fetch him tu me till I run him through a thrashing-machine."

"Is there anything we can do for you, sir?" asked a waiter, deferentially.

"Yes, yes; go an' hunt up a fire-engine an' get 'em to play a hose down my throat," he replied. "Oh, Rushy, if I only had hold of that fellow, how I'd scrunch him."

"Who is it you're looking for, sir?"

"That bob-tailed little runt that set there a moment ago grinnin'. He's the serpent that give me that chain-lightning to drink. Where is he now, till I shrivel him up?" he shouted, shaking his fist at the chair Shorty had quietly vacated after starting the racket.

It took his wife and four waiters half an hour to quiet him down, get his insides cooled off, and persuade him to put on his coat, and he left the room rubbing his stomach and vowing to pulverize that infernal little runt the first time he laid eyes on him.

The laughter indulged in by the guests of the hotel when they heard of Shorty's fresh racket, lasted till our little hero and his friend had taken their departure for the train that evening.

On their arrival at the Pennsylvania Railroad depot, they found the rest of the company awaiting them, and having secured seats by themselves, in one of the cars, they were soon being whirled away toward the City of Brotherly Love and broad brims.

When they had got fairly under way, Shorty left the balance of the company, who were amusing themselves and the rest of the passengers in the car with jokes and snatches of negro melodies, and rambled through the train to see what were the prospects of some fun. He was passing through the last car, when he noticed a party of a dozen or so clergymen seated together, one of whom called to him:

"Pause, youth!"

Shorty stopped and eyed the minister, who was a tall, stern-featured, harsh-looking man in a white neck-handkerchief and blue spectacles.

"Unregenerate son of Adam, dost thou belong on this train?"

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't, ole prayin' machine," answered Shorty comically. "An' how d'yer find out my ole dad's name was Adam?"

"Beware, unrepentant Philistine," groaned another.

"Verily, verily shall the scoffer's days be numbered," moaned a third.

"Oh, chalk your chins; what did you scoff for supper?" said Shorty, and he was starting away, when another of the party who had not yet spoken, beckoned to him, and explained that they were a jury of clergymen going on to Philadelphia to attend the trial of Brother Slyboots, which was to take place that evening, and they were anxious to telegraph their brethren in Philadelphia that they were on their way so that they could meet them on their arrival.

"Yer jest leave all dat ter me, pard. Fork over der address, an' I'll flash der glad tidings 'long der wires. I ain't sich an awful wicked pill's I looks ter be," said Shorty, who saw an opening for a tremendous racket ahead.

The clergyman handed him the address, and at the next station Shorty jumped off and telegraphed ahead:

"Brother Lookeout:—We are coming, Father Abraham. We will be in the first car of train."

"BROTHER SKIDDY-MIDINK."

Then Shorty went back into the last car, where the pious crowd were seated, and told them he had telegraphed to their friends that they would find them in the last car, and that they were to remain fast in their seats on their arrival in Philadelphia till their friends came for them; this they promised to do, and Shorty rushed back into the front car, where the troupe were keeping everybody around them in a roar with their comicalities, and whispered to them the racket he had prepared and which he desired them to take part in.

A couple of hours later the train steamed into the depot at Philadelphia, and a sanctimonious, long-faced man opened the car door and inquired:

"Is my dear Brother Skiddymidink and his party within the sound of my voice?"

"They ist," replied Shorty, nudging Shanks and winking at the rest of the gang to follow him.

"Dost I shake flippers wid Brother Lookeout?" asked Shorty, giving the minister's hand a squeeze that brought the tears into his eyes.

Fortunately for the success of Shorty's racket, none of the visiting brethren were known personally by those they were coming to confer with, so that the Reverend Lookeout hastened to lead the way to some carriages he had in waiting, and the party drove away, leaving the real clergymen sitting patiently in the train awaiting their friends.

"The brethren and sisters are all congregated in the Hall of Judea, and await but our arrival to commence the trial," said Lookeout, who was in the carriage with Shorty and Shanks.

"An' what's yer 'pinion 'bout Brother Slyboot's guilt?" asked Shorty, determined to pump the dominie and find out something about what the trial was held for.

"Ah, my dear brother, I fear he has panted after the flesh and fallen by the wayside. Sister Rachel, his wife, has testified that she saw him kiss the cook twice, with her own eyes."

"Oh, it's for kissing the cook, is it?" thought Shorty, and a few minutes later the carriages drew up before the Hall of Judea, and Shorty and the gang, putting on their longest faces, followed their guide into the building, which they found full of vinegary-looking old maids and white neck-tied ministers.

The meeting was immediately called to order as soon as the new party had taken their seats, and one of the preachers having whined through the charges, another stern, bald-headed shouter arose and inquired if any of the brethren desired to put any questions.

"You bet, baldy," said Shorty. "Was der gal he kissed purty good-lookin'?"

"She was comely to the eye, Brother Skiddymidink."

"Nebber mind 'bout her combs or bustles; was she purty as a peach?"

"Was she peaches and cream?" asked Shanks.

"Yea, verily, the damsel was pretty," said the bald-headed shouter.

"Den I say it'd have been a dam-sell if he hadn't kissed her," said Shorty, emphasizing one of the words in his reply.

The old maids in the gallery held up their hands in pious horror. Mrs. Slyboots went off into hysterics, and the clergymen opened their astonished ears and eyes.

"I move ter acquit him, if he'll 'promise ter kiss her agin," continued Shorty.

"Bully for you, pard. I second the motion," said Shanks.

"All in favor, say aye," said Tambo, and the whole gang shouted "aye" with a voice that sounded like a hundred, and set the Reverend Slyboots' heart beating with joy.

The hall now became the scene of the wildest confusion; twenty different preachers sprang to their feet at once, and shouted, gesticulated, urged motions which nobody listened to, lost their tempers, and raved and stormed; the women screamed, yelped, shrieked and cried "amen." Finally the bald-headed shouter managed to drown the rest, and raising his voice till it shook the glass in the windows, he bawled:

"Brethren and sisters, this outrageous and——"

"Go West an' hire a hall!" shouted Shorty.

"Pull down your vest, baldy!" exclaimed Shanks.

"Chalk your chin!" yelled another.

"Button up your ulster!"

"Take a tumble to your jaw-tackle!"

"Swim out, you're too fresh!"

"Put up the shutters on that mouth!"

"Give us a rest, old shiny top," yelled the gang, and the excitement became worse than ever when Shorty scrambled up on the back of a chair, and picking an imaginary banjo, sang:

"Oh, honey in de comb am very sweet,

But Slyboots' gal she was better,

So he put his arm around her waist,

And kissed her when he met her."

The gang came in with a barnyard chorus of their own, in which pigs squeaked, turkeys gobbled, hens cackled, dogs barked, cats meowed, geese hissed, donkeys brayed, roosters crowed, and the confusion was at its height, when the door opened, and the real, genuine delegation of clergymen, who had been left seated in the car at the depot, entered, and Shorty and his gay, fun-loving gang, having had enough sport for one evening, took advantage of the door being open to steal silently out, leaving the brethren to explain matters as best they could, while they made their way to the Continental Hotel, where rooms had been engaged for them, and after a jolly laugh over their evening's adventures they retired.

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, the troupe separated, Shorty and Shanks lighting cigars and strolling up Chestnut street, where their odd appearance and the former's comical mug caused every one who met them to smile, look back and smile some more.

They were turning out of Chestnut into Broad street, when they suddenly came across two of the clergymen who had come on the night before with them in the cars.

"The follower of sin and Satan, Brother Zedekiah," moaned out one.

"A prompter of strife in the Hall of Judea," groaned the other.

"Hello, old shouters, how's der gal dat Brudder Slyboots kissed? Is she goin' to recover?"

"Hope your friends didn't keep you waiting long 'at the depot last night," said Shanks.

"They are emissaries of the evil one, Brother Zedekiah."

"And their touch is contamination, Brother Enoch."

"'F you got a touch under der eye, old 'Uknock, I guess yer'd call it a black an' blue spot an' let der 'tamination slide," said Shorty, pointing his cane straight at an immense, strong-

smelling buck goat which was chewing some paper a few yards in the rear of the clergymen.

"A disciple of Beelzebub's, Brother Zedekiah."

"Yea, verily, Brother Enoch, they are dwellers in the camp of the ungodly."

"Guess you must have swallered a dickshunary when you was a kid, and never got it up since," said Shorty, still teasing the goat by pointing his cane at him.

"Come, Brother Zedekiah, let us not longer tarry in the company of the profligates."

"Thou speakest wisely, Brother Enoch, lest our brethren in this goodly city——"

Just then Shorty managed to touch the old goat on his head with the tip of his cane, and the old fellow regarding that as a challenge of a pressing character, dropped his head and dashed forward. Shorty jumped to one side, and Brother Zedekiah, serenely unconscious of coming events, received the awful shock under his coat-tails, and immediately swam out into the air; and after butting over an ash barrel with his new silk hat, he picked himself up out of the gutter, wiped the mud out of his eyes, and looked around to see how it had all happened.

The goat in the meantime had transferred his attentions to Brother Enoch, and raising himself up on his hind legs, struck him square in the bread-basket hard enough to loosen his scalp. Brother Enoch undertook to run, but the goat overtook him a moment later, and butted him head first through a jewelry store window, and the proprietor rushing out, collared him and held him fast till he forked out ten dollars to pay for the broken panes of glass, while Shorty and Shanks continued their walk, laughing heartily over the whole affair.

In the afternoon they got a carriage and drove around the city, visiting the Mint, Girard College, Fairmont Park, the Navy Yard, and all points of interest, and returned to the hotel in time for dinner, well pleased with their day's sight seeing, and the clean and regularly laid-out streets of the Quaker City.

Shorty's original intention was to have opened at Fox's American Theatre on Chestnut street, but the total destruction of that magnificent variety show building by fire compelled him to look out for another place of amusement, and the New National Theatre was finally selected.

The "Ledger" and other Philadelphia papers having copied Shorty's monkey racket with Alderman von Sprecken, and the latter official being a well-known character around the city, it proved an immense advertisement, the boys of Philadelphia flocking in by hundreds to have a peep at one they had heard so many funny stories about, so that when the curtain rose that evening, the "New York Minstrels" made their opening bow to a crowded house, who loudly applauded their every effort to entertain them.

The bill was a good one, and everything passed off as smoothly as a greased pig, till the close of the first part, when there was a universal shout for the hero of the monkey, and a hundred other rackets, to show himself, and finally finding it impossible for the performance to proceed until quiet was restored, Shorty jammed his hat under his arm and sticking his thumbs into his vest pockets strutted out before the footlights, bowed, and looking around the sea of faces with a comical grin on his mug, remarked:

"I ain't a very big thing for yer fellers ter make so much noise 'bout."

Then the crowd cheered, applauded, stamped their feet and clapped their hands, and Shorty was about bowing himself off the stage, when a voice in the gallery exclaimed:

"By ther eternal gum an' beeswax, Rushy, if there aren't that goldarned little runt that got me tu drink that infernal fire an' brimstone stuff."

Glancing up, Shorty recognized his acquaintance, Gamaliel Jones and his wife Jerusha, who had got as far as Philadelphia on their bridal tour, and concluded to pass the evening at the minstrel entertainment, little dreaming of meeting the joker who had played him such a red-hot trick in New York.

Of course the audience knew nothing of this, and shouts of "Put him out!" "Sit down, greeny!" "Got any apple sass?" "Hustle him out," greeted him on every side, making him wilder and angrier than ever.

"No, I won't set down, Rushy," he exclaimed in answer to his wife's endeavors to keep him quiet. "Think I'm goin' tu let a grinnin' little runt like that burn a hole in my vittle basket 'thout lammin' him?"

"Bounce him!" screamed one.

"Fire him out!" said another.

"Slide him off oh his eyebrow!" suggested a third.

"Tie him up in a knot an' drop him out the window," yelled a boy.

"Roll him up in his ulster, and slide him down the coal chute," said another.

"Shave his head and put him in a strait-jacket," advised a fresh voice.

"Bag his head, and sell him for country pork," chirped a fellow in the parquette.

"No, I'll be everlastingly durned if you'll shave my head!" exclaimed the now thoroughly frightened Jones, who thought every suggestion was about to be carried out, and seeing two ushers hastening down to where he was seated, he sprang to his feet, glanced wildly around and with a "Come on, Rushy, let's scrabble," he climbed over the gallery, slid down one of the pillars and tore frantically through the passageway to the door and away.

This was a scene not down on the bills, and the audience rightly conjecturing it was the result of some former racket of Shorty's, shouted and cheered themselves hoarse, and it was some moments before the song-and-dance man, who had made his appearance, could make himself heard.

Shorty's appearance in his monkey act was another signal for an outburst of applause such as Philadelphia audiences only give to their prime favorites. He had composed a new song full of local gags and hits at the alderman, which was received by the crowd with shouts of laughter and received an encore so persistent that Shorty found himself forced to repeat it.

The rest of the performance passed off swimmingly, and when the curtain finally dropped on the last act the immense crowd departed, laughing and well pleased all through with the New York Minstrels.

"Well, Shorty, my bird, that's another big chalkmark for the crowd," remarked Shanks, as they walked slowly home after the performance.

"Yes, der gang done stavin'; dere ain't any sleepy snoozers 'mongst dese fellers, same as dere was 'mongst dat ole hamfat gang I used to travel wid," said Shorty.

"I thought I'd have keeled over and whooped right out when I squinted 'round the edge of the curtain and seen old Country Jones a snortin' and ravin' away in the gallery," laughed Shanks.

Stepping into a first-class oyster-house on Chestnut street, they had some oysters, lit a couple of cigars and strolled forth again.

"How're you on rollin' ten pins, Shorty?" asked Shanks, as they passed an alley, gaily lit up.

"I allus was better rollin' der balls dan der ten pins."

"You're right on the 'cod' this evening, I see."

"Yer bet, pard, but I didn't mean codfish balls."

"Well, let's roll a game for the drinks."

"I'm yer huckleberry," answered Shorty, leading the way into the hall and selecting an alley.

At the next alley to them were a couple of Philadelphia counter-jumpers, who commenced at once to poke fun at Shorty and Shanks' ill-matched appearance.

"You fellers better climb back ter der poorhouse, else yer'll get locked out," finally remarked Shorty, after some fresh taunt had been paid to his size.

"Don't you give us any of your lip or we'll spank you, bantam," threatened one of them.

"Pity yer couldn't sell off some of yer lip, an' yer mouth wouldn't look so much like a hole a mule had kicked in yer head," said Shorty, dauntlessly.

"Let's box the brat's ears for him," suggested the other, both of whom seemed spoiling for a fight, and he was making a rush for Shorty, when the latter wheeled around and bowled his ten pin ball at him, hitting him on the shins and capsizing him head first into a waiter, who was hurrying past with a tray full of drinks, and the next minute they were both rolling around in the sawdust and broken glasses.

"Dat's a keno for ter-night, I guess," observed Shorty as he saw the barkeeper snatch up a club, waltz out and commence lathering them both. "Let's skip, pard."

"Skate off," said Shanks, and, having paid their bill, they started back to the Continental, talking over the events and adventures of the day.

CHAPTER IV.

Crowded houses and well pleased audiences greeted the New York Minstrels every night during their stay in Philadelphia, Shorty becoming a prime favorite with the boys of the Quaker City from the word "go," and as hardly a day passed but he was at the bottom of some fresh racket, his appearance on the stage or street was a sure sign of fun ahead.

"Do yer twig dat snufflin' ole broadbrim and his wife over dere?" asked Shorty of his friend Shanks as they were taking dinner the next day at the hotel.

"Do you mean old mealy-mouth at the second table, who's tryin' to gobble up his soup with a fork?"

"Yee up, dat's der shrimp."

"All O. K., I drop to him. Why?"

"Nothin', only he's der snorin' machine dat was runnin' all las' night," said Shorty.

"Well, darn his old mutton head. Why, he's worse than seven tom cats, a brass band, the itch and a sore toe," replied Shanks as he sailed into the breast of a turkey.

"You bet he's a cuss at it."

"Don't think he's got an equal. Why, he shook the tacks out of the carpet in our room," laughed Shanks.

"Some feller'd make a big stake if dey'd kidnap 'im, larn 'im ter snore tunes an' den tote 'im roun' in a side show wid some snide circus," suggested Shorty.

"Fi was his wife I'd just as soon be married to the steam whistle of a locomotive."

"I've seed lots of der shakin' Quakers, but I reckon dis ole snorter must be a snorin' Quaker, an' boss of der gang at dat."

"I guess I'll go out to Germantown and sleep to-night. I don't s'pose a feller would hear him bad ten miles away."

"Cheese it, pard. I'll racket 'im out of 'ere ter-morrow, if I've eber been introduced ter myself, an' I think I 'ave."

"Bully for you. It'll be my treat an' your drink if you do," said Shanks, wondering how it was going to be accomplished.

That afternoon Shorty procured some silk twine, a couple of fish hooks and a handful of horsehair. The latter he cut up into very fine pieces, and, watching his opportunity when the snoring Quaker and his wife had gone out to the Friends' meeting, Shorty got Shanks to boost him up, and scrambling like a cat through the transom over the door, he was soon inside of the room.

"Golly, s'pose I should get copped in 'ere, dey'd jug me in Moyamensing Prison for a crib cracker 'fore I could turn a flip-flap," mused Shorty as he hurried over to the bed, turned down the sheets, shook the fine-cut horschair between them and replaced them again. Then fastening his fish hooks through all the bed clothing at the foot of the bed, he led the fine silk twine up through the transom and into their own room.

"By hokey! dat was a tight ole squeeze of it," chuckled Shorty when he had scrambled through the opening again.

"Fide had a speck more corporation on my bread basket I'd 'ave stuck fast up dere."

That night they hurried home from the theatre as soon as Shorty had done his monkey act, and going up to their room, lit cigars and waited quietly for the return of their snoring neighbor.

They had been in their room about ten minutes when they heard the old fellow come along the hall, unlock his door and enter.

"Rebecca, thou wilt have to remove thy raiment in the dark, as I am in ignorance of the manner by which light is obtained from this spigot," they heard him remark, after burning his fingers with a couple of matches trying to light the gas without turning it on.

His wife made no reply, and after her husband had stumbled over a rocking-chair and nearly broken his toenail, he climbed into bed. They were quiet for about ten minutes, when she was heard to say:

"Nehemiah, dost thou sleep?"

"Nay, nay."

"I feareth, Nehemiah, that bugs and unseemly vermin inhabiteth this bed," she continued, scratching away at her legs.

Just then Shorty gave the string a pull, hauling the bed clothing off on the floor.

"Thou hast fidgeted the covering off the bed, Rebecca, with thy restlessness."

"Nay, Nehemiah, it was thee."

Then the old fellow was heard scrambling out of bed, colliding with the rocking-chair, bumping his shins against the wash-stand, and finally putting the clothes back on the bed.

"Oh, Nehemiah, sleep will not visit my eyes while these vermin tormenteth me."

"They flocketh upon my legs in droves and glideth under my shirt," he replied.

Shorty and Shanks, who had been convulsed with laughter at the way the racket was working, stuffed their handkerchiefs in their mouths and the former pulled the string again, and once more the bed clothing was stripped off the pair in the room opposite.

"Dost thou suffer from the heat that thou kickest the cover-lids off?" asked the old lady.

"It was thee, woman," said her husband, scratching his legs like mad.

"Nay, I say 'twas thee," she contradicted, getting up, and after groping around, tossed the clothes back on the bed.

"Verily doth the vermin devour me," he exclaimed, raking his legs with his nails as the horsehair tickled them.

Shorty yanked the clothing off the bed again, and the old Quaker slammed his arms around to try and catch it, fetching his wife a crack across the breast that nearly knocked the wind out of her.

"Art thou crazy, Nehemiah?" she gasped, sitting up in the bed and shaking him.

"Thou hadst better get a piece of ice and sit upon it if thou is so warm that thou cans't not let the covering rest upon the bed," he exclaimed angrily as he tumbled out of bed once more after the bed clothing.

Shorty let him get back into bed and nicely settled when he again hauled them off him.

"Rebecca, beware! Thee is fooling with thy best friend," he shouted, popping up in bed like a jack-in-a-box, and mad all over.

"It is unseemly and sinful for a man of thy years, Nehemiah, to flounce thyself around as thou dost."

"I will speak of thee to the elders."

"An' I'll speak of thee to the Friends."

"Thee is a fool," jawed old broadbrim, bouncing out of bed, peeling his nose against the door jamb and tumbling the clothes back on the bed.

He had just got in and covered himself up when Shorty snaked them off again, and the next minute there was a free fight in that room, as the Quaker, snatching after the depart-

ing clothes, missed them and grabbed his wife by the nose, and the old lady, getting her back up, went for his mug with her finger nails and everlastingly clawed him.

"Dere, pard, I guess dat'll do 'em for ter-night, but whenever yer wake up just snatch the covers off them for luck," said Shorty, leaning back and laughing heartily.

"By George! Shorty, you've made me sore in the ribs from laughing," said Shanks.

Every time during the night that either of them awoke the string was pulled, the clothes stripped off the snoring Quaker and his scratching wife, and the former would be heard jawing, scrambling, stumbling and praying for a judgment of heaven to come down and smite him if ever he was caught again inside of a hotel.

Shorty was up early next morning and broke the fine string off close to where it passed over the door, and the old people never noticed it when they fled from the house next morning. Nehemiah's face looking as if he'd been raking it with a curry-comb.

Of course such practical jokes always leak out, and before that night one of the evening papers had got hold of it and came out with an account of the affair, under the heading of "How to Cure a Snorer." This proved an immense advertising card for the minstrel troupe, and during the rest of the week it was impossible to get standing room, so anxious were the boys to see Shorty.

The week drew finally to an end, and the New York Minstrels made their farewell bow to the host of friends they had made in the city by their gentlemanly manners off the stage as much as by their inimitable performance before the foot-lights.

Baltimore had been visited by Shorty's advance agent, rooms secured at Barnum's Hotel, and the billboards, fences and walls covered with illuminated posters announcing the coming of the company, so that nothing was left for them to do but to get up and get.

They met accordingly the next morning at the Pennsylvania Central Railroad depot, and after a parting drink and shake of the hands with their friends who had come to see them off, they scrambled aboard of the train just as it was pulling out and were fortunate enough to obtain seats together.

"Well, we're off again," remarked Shanks as he folded his long legs under the seat and looked around.

"Yer bet, we're often on der move," coddled Shorty.

"Might call us train-ed minstrels," laughed Dave Reed, who did the bones business.

"Who leave many a tie behind?" said Tambo, pointing out of the window to the railroad ties over which they were passing.

"We don't wear bustles if we do have ties behind," observed Shanks.

"Tickets here," bawled the conductor, coming up to the party.

"We don't want ter tick it," said Shorty, cocking his eye up comically at the gayly uniformed conductor.

"Come, you must show it here."

"Can't show dis side of Baltimore. We're billed for dat town."

"Your fare an' less chin," said the conductor, sternly.

"We may be fair jest now, but we're der wust kind of brunettes when we gets corked up," said Shorty, and the passengers shouted with laughter.

"Haven't you got any money?"

"Stacks of it."

"Then, if you don't pay your way I'll fire you off."

"I weigh a hundred an' thirty, an' I want ter be round when dat conflagration comes off," said Shorty.

"This train don't carry dead heads," remarked the conductor, getting angry.

"Den yer had better jump off, fur yer der worst ole lookin' corpse I've seen ter-day," replied Shorty, and the rest of the band echoed his sentiments.

"I shan't stand this."

"Den take a seat. You'll find one on der oder side dere."

"I must have money."

"Den you'd better sell yerself ter some doctor ter dissect yer."

"I'll stop the train."

"I guess I can stan' that if der train can."

"An' I'll bounce the whole crowd of you off."

"Ain't dat a kinder big contract yer goin' ter take? Better take a partner in ter help yer or der train'll be late gettin' inter Baltimore," said Shorty so funnily that the passengers indulged in another laugh.

"Have or haven't you got any tickets?" demanded the conductor, now frantic with rage, but feeling himself helpless before the crowd.

"Course we 'ave."

"Well, why in thunder didn't you let me see them at first?"

"Cause yer was so good lookin' we thort we'd like der pleasure of yer company," said Shorty, and as the man was particularly homely, this set everybody in the car giggling again, and the conductor thought he'd give up his chances of heaven and a month's pay to be able to safely wring that little runt's neck, but he was forced to bottle his rage and punch the tickets instead of the heads of their owners.

"Don't yer forget ter drop 'roun' again an' be sociable," said Shorty, mockingly.

"Hain't got a photograph of yourself you'd give a feller to remember you by?" inquired Shanks, sticking out one of his long legs and letting him trip over it.

"What sized watch do you carry so as we can buy you one that'll fit when we get to Baltimore?" asked Dave Reed.

"Never mind 'bout askin' us to have a smoke. We're just as much 'bliged," said Tambo.

"I'd like to give the whole of you a dose of poison," muttered the conductor, punching the last ticket and starting for the door.

"Da, da."

"Ta, ta."

"Bye, bye."

"Au revoir."

"You forgot to kiss me farewell," shouted the gang.

"Go to thunder!" yelled the conductor, rushing out and slamming the door, and he never showed his face again during their trip.

On their arrival in Baltimore they took a stage and drove to the Barnum Hotel, where splendid apartments, facing on Calvert street, had been reserved for them, and after washing the dust of travel from themselves, they partook of a hearty meal and started off for the Front Street Theatre, where they found that their reputation had preceded them, and a good house was awaiting the curtain to ring up.

Everything passed off lovely; the songs were new and well rendered, the jokes funny enough to make a mule laugh and forget to kick, the dancing tiptop, and Shorty's famous banjo performance brought down the house and received a stunning encore.

Shorty and Shanks returned to the hotel immediately after the performance was over, well pleased with the cordial reception the troupe had met with, and after a consultation, concluded to have a smoke and a good night's rest and defer their sight-seeing till the following day.

Now it appears that the same train that brought the New York Minstrels to Baltimore had also conveyed the Honorable William Gelley, member of Congress, who had been on business in Philadelphia on a short visit to his constituency before proceeding to Washington, and he, too, had taken up his room at the Barnum Hotel, and his friends and admirers, learning of his presence in the city, had determined to give him a serenade, to which end the crack band of the place had been engaged, and great preparations made that the affair might prove worthy of the industrious and enterprising city of Baltimore.

Shorty and Shanks heard of the proposed serenade on their return to the hotel, and the former instantly thought of a racket which would throw all his past ones into the shade.

Punctual to the hour named the band drew up in front of the hotel, followed by an immense crowd of citizens, who had assembled to listen to the music and the views of the distinguished member of Congress on the affairs of the country.

After the band had played several beautiful pieces the window of the Hon. Mr. Gelley was thrown open, and that gentleman stepped forth on the little balcony that was in front of each window. At the same moment Shorty, whose room was the next one, threw open his window, and dressed in a full, plantation darkey rig with his face blacked, stepped forth on his little balcony and bowed to the immense crowd below.

The effect was irresistible and cheers, peals of laughter, yells and thunders of applause followed their appearance, the band striking up "Hail to the Chief" at the same moment.

"Go inside, sir!" exclaimed the Congressman, red as a boiled lobster, and fairly boiling over with passion.

"Go inside yerself, an' see how yer like it," said Shorty, still bowing to the crowd, whose cheers grew fairly deafening when it was noised about that the celebrated Shorty, of the New York Minstrels, was before them.

"These are my constituency, gathered here to welcome me amongst them," said the Representative savagely.

"Dese 'er my constituiionarys an' dey've come 'ere ter welcome dis hair-pin," replied Shorty.

"I command you to withdraw!"

"Yer can't command one side of dis chicken!"

"Speech! speech!" yelled the crowd below, dancing around and waving torches.

In the meantime, the members of the company having arrived at the hotel, and seeing the fun, mixed themselves through the crowd and at a signal commenced shouting:

"Shorty! speech! Shorty! Shorty!" and the crowd immediately divided itself, one-half catching up the cry and making the air ring with our little hero's name, while the others yelled for "Gelley! Gelley!"

"This is an outrage!" said the Hon. William, turning purple with rage and vexation.

"Am it?" asked Shorty, rolling up the whites of his eyes and sticking his thumbs into the arm-holes of his vest.

"You shall sweat for this interference."

"Tain't half warm 'nuff ter sweat dis dark."

"Gelley! Gelley! Speech! speech! speech!" yelled part of the crowd.

"Shorty! Shorty! speech! speech!" bawled the others. The band struck up, every one shouted, hurrahed, yelled, waved torches, laughed and seemed fairly delirious with excitement, and the scene was one never to be forgotten.

"Fellow citizens and constituents," commenced the Hon. William Gelley, advancing to the front of the balcony and bowing, "your enthusiastic and hearty welcome has proved to me that my Congressional labors have met with your sanction and endorsement, without which I would never have been satisfied. Coming before you this evening——"

"Feller cisterns an' constitushonarys of Baltimore," said Shorty, coming forward and bowing to the right and left, "Ise heah ter thank yer fur der howlin' ole 'spressions of joy at seein' me back yeah once more wid yer, and if yer'll only jess gif me yer attention till I 'splain der sitervation of t'ings round dese diggin's, I'll use my influence with my colleague and friend, Mr. Gelley, ter git him ter sing a comic song fur yer, but——"

The shouts and roars of laughter from the crowd, which was growing larger every moment, drowned everything. In vain the member of Congress held up his hand for silence and shrieked forth his words; the yells of the crowd overpowered them.

"I'll have satisfaction for this insult!" screamed the frantic Representative, who knew the joke would be known from Maine to San Francisco by morning.

"Stuffed clubs for two, an' meet me by moonlight alone," said Shorty, pointing an imaginary pistol at him.

"Shorty forever! Hip, hip, hurrah! for the boss boy of the New York Minstrels!" yelled the crowd, and our hero stepped forward once more and kissed his hand to the excited and uproarious mass of people.

"Am I alive and in the possession of my faculties or do I dream?"

"Give it up; ain't worth shucks at der conundrum business. Try me on der banjo if yer wish ter see me ter home," interrupted Shorty.

"I, a member of Congress, representing one of the richest and most intellectual districts in the nation; that I, whose voice has so often rung through the halls of Congress, should be bearded here by some insignificant minstrel," said the Honorable William in a voice hoarse with passion.

"Better go inter der fish-peddlin' biz, an' den yer can let yer voice ring up der dark alleys. As fur yer bein' bearded, jest take a spin down ter der barber's downstairs, an' he'll shave it all off yer clean as a baby fur ten cents, an', las', yer better take a tumble an' wipe off yer chin, when yer get up on yer eyebrow an' call der New York Minstrel gang an insignificant lot of hamfatters," replied Shorty, putting his thumb to his nose and wriggling the fingers at the honorable gentleman, who rushed into the house, slammed down the window, hastily packed a few things together, and, slipping out of a side door, made a break for the depot, where, catching a train that was leaving, he was whirled off to Washington, the most angry and disgusted Representative ever met.

Shorty retired to his room a few minutes afterward and found Shanks and Dave Reed rolling on the carpet in paroxysms of laughter. But it was hours before the last of the crowd dispersed, laughing and talking over this most wonderful of all Shorty's rackets.

CHAPTER V.

The next morning found every one in Baltimore talking and laughing over Shorty's wonderful racket of the night previous. All the morning papers took it up and published full accounts of it, and our little hero found himself besieged, whenever he left the hotel, by a good-natured crowd, anxious to catch a glimpse of the mischievous, prank-playing little fellow.

"What d'you say if we have a toddle 'round the city?" asked Shanks, after they had breakfasted.

"Dat's my best hold. Let's set fire ter a couple of cigars an' den we'll paddle," replied Shorty, leading the way into the barroom of the hotel.

They were lighting their Havanas at the cigar counter when a thin, clean-shaven man, with a pencil behind his ear and a notebook in his hand, darted across the room and said:

"Allow me to introduce myself; name's Chinit."

"Don't chin it ter us," said Shorty.

"Represent 'Baltimore American Bugle'."

"Yer blow der bugle, I s'pose."

"Member of press. Leviathan power; moves the world."

"He's trying to impress us," said Shanks, humorously.

"Den why don't it move yer if it moves der world?" inquired Shorty so comically that several people who had stopped to listen commenced laughing.

"I came here to ascertain some information regarding your career, Mr. Shorty," said the member of the press, opening his notebook and wetting the point of his pencil.

"Want ter pump me, hey?"

"I want to interview you in the interests of the 'Baltimore American Bugle'."

"Duz it hurt much?"

"No, no; interview you, I said."

"Tain't nuthin' like tooth-pulling, is it?"

"Interviewing is talking to you."

"Buzzin' me, hey?"

"Extracting your ideas."

"Dere, yer getting round ter dat tooth-jerking bizness again."

"I assure you I mean to cause you no physical or mental discomfort."

"Goin' ter give me laffin' gas, mebbe," suggested Shorty so innocently that the bystanders roared again.

"You misunderstand me. I simply wish to obtain your life for publication."

"Obtain my life. Goin' ter start a buryin' ground?"

"Goodness, no; I'm a reporter."

"One of dem fellers dat lugs trunks up stairs an' smashes boxes 'bout?"

"Not at all; that's a porter. I'm connected with a paper."

"Use a string ter connect yerself wid it or gum stickum?"

"Will you or will you not give me some items?" said the reporter, worked up to fever heat.

"Got some fust-class peppermint drops upstairs I'll give yer, if dat's what yer want."

"In the first place, Mr. Shorty, the public would like to know your birthplace."

"Would dey?"

"What shall I tell them?"

"Tell 'em yer don't know, but yer'll strike off a second edition soon as yer find out."

"Name in full is—?"

"Nebber get full."

"I mean your other names besides Shorty."

"Oh, I savey. Well, 'f ye ebber hear any feller 'quirin' 'round for Zacharia, Tristram, Sylvester, Thaddeous—got that down?" asked Shorty.

"Yes."

"Rufus, Phineas, Philander, Lorenzo—got 'em down?"

"Ye-es."

"Well, den comes Dionysius, Marcellus, Hannibal, Bartholomew—got 'em, too?"

"Ye-e-e-s."

"Den dere's Lemuel Orlando Shorty, Esquire—got dat?"

"Thank heaven you're through. How or where oh earth did you ever get so many names?"

"Nebber got 'em at all. Dem ain't my names."

"Not your names?" gasped the reporter.

"Course not. I told yer 'bout 'em, so dat if yer ever met anybody of dat name, ye'd know 't wasn't this clothes-pin," replied Shorty quietly, and the people around leaned up against the wall and laughed, while the reporter got red up to his ears and tore the page he had written out of his notebook.

"You're a very singular character."

"You bet. I s'pose dat's 'cause I nebber was married," answered Shorty.

"You're manager of the New York Minstrel Troupe. I understand?" questioned the reporter, returning to the charge.

"Yes, I manage ter run dat gang."

"Do you travel with them?"

"Well, I mostly trabbels wid der cars," answered Shorty, flicking the white ashes from his cigar.

"Jumping Cæsar! Can't you understand what I'm saying to you?" asked the reporter, excitedly.

"Nebber was acquainted with any of der Cæsar famerly. How fur could dat feller jump standin' on a spring board?"

"Go to blazes and find out!" exclaimed the reporter, jumping up, jamming his hat down over his eyes and thrusting his notebook down in his pockets as if he never meant to touch it again.

"Goin' ter print all dem statements yer extracted in der 'Bugle?'" inquired Shorty, and the crowd roared with laughter as the interviewer, with a scowl on his face, struck out suddenly for the door.

Then Shorty and Shanks sauntered out, but finding they were attracting too much attention by walking, they hailed a carriage and drove around the Monumental City, visiting Druid Hill Park, the City Hall, Maryland Institute, Washing-

ton and the other beautiful monuments which have given the city its name.

Full house was no name for the house that flocked to see and hear the New York Minstrels that and every evening during their stay in the city. It was a perfect jam of laughing, good-natured, applauding people, who shouted themselves hoarse over the jokes and songs of the boys from the Empire State, but when the curtain went up, disclosing Shorty, dressed in the plantation rig he had worn the night before, and standing upon a balcony formed to represent as near as possible the one at the hotel, the audience rose and made the very rafters shake with their cheers and applause.

Shorty had prepared a little speech for the occasion, full of gags and hits, which kept all hands in paroxysms of laughter till he bowed himself off the stage after the third encore.

At the expiration of the week the troupe packed their little traps, shook hands all around and boarded the train once more for a change of cities. Washington was the next place on the programme, and as the run was only forty miles, the boys found themselves there almost before they were aware of it.

"Golly, 'ere's some 'gressional commity comin' rootin' down after dere ducats," said a darkey hackman as he saw the party alighting from the cars.

"Shoh, nig, dey'se carpet-baggers," replied another.

"Shucks! Dose fellers is after post-offices," said a third.

"'F1 was runnin' a post-office I'd hire dat mouth of yers for a letter box," said Shorty.

Having secured hacks for the party, Shorty gave the order and they were driven to the Arlington Hotel, where a handsome suit of apartments had been secured for them.

"I believe I must treat myself to a scrape. My chin's gettin' rough as sand-paper," said Shanks, after they had washed and junched.

"I reckon I'll astonish my face wid some lather an' have dat ole topknot of mine rubbed, so slide 'long, I'm wid yer," remarked Shorty.

Descending to the barber shop in the basement of the hotel, they passed through an outer room, on a table in which lay some dozen or more hats belonging to customers who were taking baths or getting shaved.

"Hold on fur a minute, an' I'll show yer a gay ole racket or I'm a cotton-headed sinner," said Shorty, glancing around to see there was nobody in the room but themselves.

"Go it, pard. I'll pipe off the doors an' 'give you the office' if any one tumbles," replied Shanks in a whisper.

Shorty slipped over to the mantelpiece, snatched up a bottle of shoe varnish, quickly coated around the inside of each hat, then, secreting the bottle, he followed Shanks into the barber shop and took their places with the others that were waiting for their turn.

"Next!" said one of the barbers a few minutes after their entrance, and a short, stout man jumped out of the chair, was whisked off, went into the other room after his hat and returned a moment later with it on.

"You ought to have had your hair cut, sir. It's getting rather long," said the barber as the other paid him.

"My hair long? Nonsense," said the short, stout man, going over to a looking glass, trying to lift his hat off and nearly lifting his scalp with it.

"Great suffering Columbus! What in thunder's got into my head now?"

"Want a shampoo, sir, 'fore you go?" inquired the boss barber, watching him with amazement.

"Want the d—l! I want to get this cussed hat off if it takes every hair I've got."

"Next!" sang out another barber, and a red-headed man glided in, put on his plug hat, tripped lightly out, and on going to have a look at himself in the glass was profanely surprised and excited at not being able to budge his hat.

"Don't your hair suit you?" asked the boss barber of the last victim.

"Suit the dickens, you idiot!" howled the brick-top man, as he tried to drag his plug off.

A bald-headed man, who had been having a bath, entered at this moment and joined the others in swearing, stamping, skipping about and trying to lift the tops of their heads off, while Shorty and Shanks hid their faces behind a couple of newspapers and nearly shook themselves off their chairs with laughter.

Ten minutes later that shop was filled with howling, cavitating, maniacal men, who alternately tugged and tore at their hats in vain attempts to get them off, and failing, chased the frightened barbers around the shop for satisfaction.

"Oh, you lathering scoundrel, d'you s'pose I'm going to sleep in my hat for the rest of my life?" exclaimed a pugilistic victim, letting fly his right fist at a flying barber and knocking him over a chair.

"Goodness alive! See here, barber, I'm a deacon in the church and have to lead the prayer meeting to-night. You must really get this off me at once," pleaded the meek-looking old gentleman, coming forward out of a corner, where he had been praying and struggling to get himself free from his hat without unroofing his head.

"Confound your razor-sharpening picture! What in Halifax did you put on my hair?" bawled another customer, as he backed one of the barbers up into a corner and commenced pummeling him.

"Bay rum an— Oh, don't sir! don't!"

"Bay fiddlesticks, you villain!" interrupted the other, getting his fingers in the barber's shirt band and giving it a twist.

"I—I—assure you, s—sir—y—you're c—choking m—me, s—sir!" gasped the knight of the razor, his eyes popping out like lobsters' as the pugilistic and angry customer took another turn in his shirt-band.

"I'll choke you inside out if you don't get that hat off me."

Then the badly scared barber caught the rim of the hat with both hands and gave a wrench, and his oppressor dropped down on his knees and howled for mercy.

"You will hit me!" exclaimed the barber, hauling him around on the floor by his hat.

"Let go, you darned idiot! Don't you know your hauling my brains out?" cried his victim.

"And choke me, hey?" and the shampooer gave the hat another jerk, while its owner shrieked like a menagerie broke loose.

"Come 'long, Shanks; let's us make a break out of 'ere," said Shorty, starting quietly out of the door, followed by Shanks and the yells and profanity of the struggling crowd behind them.

"Twouldn't be healthy down dere wid dose hamfatters if dey found out who gummed dere plugs on to dem," laughed Shorty, when they had turned the corner.

"Heavens and earth! they'd murder you in seven shakes of a lamb's tail," replied Shanks. "I thought I'd have laughed my back teeth out when I saw the fellow down on his knees in the corner praying for the angels to come down and help him off with his hat."

"Den dere was another clam dat kept a-tellin' me he was goin' ter be married ter-day, an' wantin' ter know how he'd look standin' up 'fore der minister wid an ole played-out plug hat on," replied Shorty, and they both shouted with laughter at the recollection of the scene they had passed through.

"And what did you advise him to do, Shorty?"

"Oh, I 'vised 'im ter chop off his head an' leave it outside der church till he'd got spliced an' den glue it on wid a little of der same gum squintum," chuckled Shorty, and they turned into Pennsylvania avenue a moment later and started off in search of another barber's shop.

That evening the New York Minstrels opened at Ford's Opera House to a full house. Shorty's reputation as a joker had preceded him, and the boys of Washington mustered strong to give him a welcome worthy of the capital of the United States.

The performance was, as usual, a good one. Everything worked smoothly and the audience manifested their appreciation of the company's efforts by long and frequent outbursts of applause, Shorty, as usual, carrying off the honors of the evening.

"Well, pard, good house for a first night, wasn't it?" asked Shanks as they left the theatre.

"Bully good. We can't squeal at our luck so far," replied Shorty, tipping a stout, pompous gentleman's hat off with his cane, picking it up quickly and handing it to him with:

"This is yourn, ain't it? I thought I saw yer drop somethin'."

"Of course it's mine. But who in thunder knocked it off?" replied the stout party, not knowing whether to strike or thank Shorty.

"What's the matter wid yer anyhow? Don't yer want yer hat?"

"Did you see who it was knocked it off me?"

"I don't care 'bout tellin' tales," replied Shorty.

"But I demand to know, and if I don't teach him to knock another gentleman's hat off, I'll eat my shirt."

"Mash 'im, wouldn't yer?"

"I say, show me the man who done it."

"I shouldn't wonder if he could get away wid yer. He's awful sly and religious like, but he's quicker den a flash at der rough-an'-tumble," said Shorty.

"I'll risk it. Where is he?"

"Well, I s'pose if I must tell yer I must, dat's all 'bout it. D'yer see dat feller in der white choker and de book in his hand shinnin' long ahead of us dere?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, he was actin' dreful suspishus 'bout der time yer hat cum off."

The stout gentleman waited to hear no more, but quickening his pace till he overtook the stranger, who was a city missionary returning home from a prayer meeting, he slapped him on the shoulder and remarked:

"Thought you'd get away, didn't you?"

"Get away?" asked the missionary, wonderingly.

"Smart trick that was, only it didn't work worth a clam."

"I'm afraid you have been looking upon the wine when it is red," said the man of peace.

"An' I'm afraid I'm going to bust you square in the ear in about two minutes and a half."

"And wherefore has my ear offended you?"

"Think you can knock a fellow's hat over his nose with impunity?"

"Knock your hat over your nose. Why, man, I'm a missionary in the city," replied the gospel man, concluding he was conversing with a lunatic.

"Missionary's too thin. I'll make you think a tribe of cannibals had got hold of you."

"I was returning from the house of prayer when you rudely broke in upon my meditations."

"I'll break in upon your jaw if you ever try any more such games on me. D'you hear that?" asked the stout gentleman, excitedly, and he was turning away when Shorty and Shanks came along, and the former quickly and without being noticed flipped his hat off again with the point of his cane.

"Oh, ho!" you're at it again, are you?" exclaimed the fat man, diving into the gutter after his tile, and then rushing after the missionary, who was quietly pursuing his way in total ignorance of the whole affair, till he found himself halted by the stout gentleman and invited to fight.

"Go thy way, man, and interrupt me not further with your boisterous and unseemly conversation," said the missionary, endeavoring to pass him.

"I'm going to interrupt you right in the nose," replied the fat man, squaring off and shaking his fists around recklessly.

"Your intellect is either deranged or you are under the excitement of liquor. In either case I desire no further conversation with you."

"An' you s'pose you can get up and skim my hat into the gutter whenever you darn please?"

"The idea is simply ridiculous and preposterous."

"It may be ridiculous for you, but I'll be teetotally hanged if 'tis for me, and I'm just going to have satisfaction out of your hide!" said the stout man, dancing around on the sidewalk in front of the missionary and finally striking out a blow from the shoulder.

"I detest quarrels and avoid brawls, but I must convert this man of violent deeds and false accusations," said the missionary, laying his hymn-book down on one of the steps and putting up his fists in a way that showed he was posted in the manly art of self-defense.

"Take that, Smarty, and see how you like knocking off hats," said the fat man, letting fly a blow at the other's head.

"In the interests of Christianity, I strike," replied the missionary, cleverly parrying the blow and planting a stinger on his opponent's chin.

"Don't ask me to spare you after that!" and the fat man struck out madly right and left.

"For the conversion of the heathen in our midst, I smite," said the missionary as he got a left and right hander on the fat man's eyes.

"Oh, that's your game, is it?" exclaimed the stout party, puffing like a porpoise as he made a rush at his hard-fisted little opponent.

"In aid of the oppressed and defenceless, I let fly," remarked the missionary, stepping to one side as the fat man came at him and landing a left hander behind the ear that brought him down on his knees and gave him the impression that he had been kicked by a mule.

"Hold on! let up! I've got enough!" said the fat man, getting up and starting off in search of a drug store.

"I have labored and wrestled for the advancement of missionary work," said the missionary, picking up his hat and hymn-book and meandering slowly away.

"Shoot me, if dat ain't der gamest little preacher ever I spotted," said Shorty, who with Shanks had been amused spectators of the whole affair.

"Understood his business right up to the handle," replied Shanks, laughing.

"Put up his props like an old-time buffer," continued Shorty as they started for the hotel.

"Gommen, sah, waitin' ter see ye, sah," said one of the colored waiters, coming over to Shorty as soon as he entered the hotel.

"Did he give yer his name?"

"No, sah."

"Where is he?" asked our hero.

"In de deception room, sah."

"All O K, Pomp. I'll find 'im," said Shorty, ascending the stairs and entering the reception room, where he found himself face to face with the Honorable Mr. Gelly, member of Congress.

"Hello, Beeswax, old shouter. Glad to see yer hain't forgot a feller," said Shorty, winking his eye and giving a low whistle of astonishment to Shanks.

"I have called upon you, fellow, in reference to your outrageous and unpardonable conduct toward me in Baltimore," replied the honorable member, pacing up and down the room with nervous strides.

"Oh, dat's all right, ole hop-fly. I forgive yer, an' yer needn't take such a little thing so much ter heart."

"Little thing! Do you call it a little thing for me, a member of Congress, to be held up as an object of ridicule and laughing stock all over the country?"

"What's the use of blamin' yerself 'bout it?" asked Shorty, comically.

"Blame myself! Why, I only blame myself for not having had you hurled from that infernal balcony!" exclaimed the member of Congress frantically.

"Guess yer don't get 'nuff ter eat at yer hash house, or yer

wouldn't come belly-achin' 'round 'ere wid yer back up on yer shoulders like a camel," replied Shorty aggravatingly.

"Do you suppose, you insignificant runt, that it's nothing when I arise in my seat in the House to be asked by some member when I was going to have another serenade?"

"Yer act jest as if yer were troubled wid worms. an' if yer am, soak in dead loads of catnip tea an' sulphur, an' yer'll knock 'em higher than a kite," advised Shorty.

"I shall have recourse to the law."

"I shall have recourse ter some feller ter kick yer down stairs if yer don't swim out."

"You shall hear from me," said the honorable member, stamping toward the door.

"Don't yer forget ter put a stamp on der envelope," called out Shorty after him, but he received no reply.

CHAPTER VI.

We left our friends, Shorty and Shanks, at the Arlington House, in Washington, enjoying a hearty laugh over the reappearance, rage and threats of the Honorable Mr. Gelly.

"Dat hamfattin' spouter's mad 'nuff ter burst an' blow himself all ter flinders," said Shorty, as the door slammed behind the Congressional member.

"Mad's no name for it. Why, I wouldn't trust him alone with a bar of soap, for fear he'd cut his throat," laughed Shanks.

"Or a codfish ball ter blow his brains out wid," suggested Shorty humorously.

"Yes, or drown himself in a glass of milk punch."

"Shucks, pard, if ever dat wind-bag commits susanside it'll be by talkin' hisself ter death."

"Yes, or 'cause nobody'll listen ter him."

Having thrown away their cigars, Shorty and Shanks started off for bed, where they managed to enjoy a good night's sleep in spite of the thunderbolts the Honorable Mr. Gelly had threatened to launch at their heads.

They were snoozing away like humming-tops the next morning when a loud knock at the door drove sleep from their pillows and opened their eyelids as if they had been set on springs.

"Who's dere?" exclaimed Shorty, popping up in bed.

"Only me, sah," said a voice outside of the door.

"I'm glad of dat, for I thought it was an earthquake," said Shorty.

"House hasn't been struck by lightning, has it?" inquired Shanks, sitting up on the side of the bed.

"No, sah, not dat I'm preware of."

"Hotel's not on fire?"

"No conflagration, sah."

"Any riot going on?"

"I didn't observe any as I prescended the stairs, sah."

"No mad dog around?"

"No, sah; no hyperphobia."

"Anybody got the smallpox?"

"No confectious diseases, sah."

"No person dead?"

"No, sah, no one kerfunkt."

"Anybody born?"

"I ain't shuah 'bout dat, sah."

"What was yer buttin' at der door for 't any rate?" asked Shorty.

"Gemmey downstair, sah, insist 'pon seein' Mister Shorty, sah."

"Did he giv' yer his pasteboard?"

"Yes, sah."

"All rite, darkness. Jest hole yer breath a minute an' I'll be wid yer," said Shorty, sliding out of bed and waddling over to the door, where the water bathed him a-again.

"Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort—immediate," read Shorty, slowly.

"Who in thunder's Hold the Fort?"

"Some cockroach major, I s'pose," replied Shorty. Then turning to the grinning darkey, he said: "Slide off on yer lip an' tell der officer I'll be wid 'im 'fore he can pick his teeth wid a straw."

Hastily dressing themselves, Shorty and Shanks descended to the reception room, where they found a big, pot-bellied marine officer, stalking to and fro like some immense human paroquet.

"Bombs and bloodshed! Which of you gentlemen is named Shorty?" he demanded on their entrance.

"Dat's der name dis huckleberry's got pinned ter him," said Shorty, glancing up at his braided and brass-bound visitor.

"Then, sir, you are the diminutive party whom I'm commissioned to wait upon."

"Bile ahead, major, an' save yer wind," said Shorty coolly.

"I am here on behalf of my friend, the Honorable William Gelly, member of Congress."

"Which half?"

"Shot and shell, sir! Don't you attempt any levity with me!"

"Guess yer ain't anybody in particuller, are yer?" asked Shorty.

"Grape and canister! do you call Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort, of the Marine Corps, nobody?"

"Is yer in der hoss marines?"

"Sir?"

"No relation ter Captain Jinks, are ye?"

"Guns and glory! You shall repent of that remark, sir."

"Been swallowing an arsenal, ain't yet?" asked Shanks.

"Banjo and sheepskin! what yer tryin' ter get through yerself, anyhow?" inquired Shorty.

"Satisfaction, sir; satisfaction for the insults you have heaped upon my friend Gelly's good name and reputation. I am here to deliver his challenge," exclaimed the major, cutting the air with his cane as if it was a saber.

"P-h-e-w!" whistled Shanks.

"Wants ter fight a duel?" asked Shorty.

"Precisely."

"Cut an' shoot, hey?" said Shanks.

"Carve an' slice?" inquired Shorty.

"He demands a meeting, sir," said the major.

"He's my meat," replied Shorty.

"Bullets and bayonets! This is an affair of honor and admits of no frivolous language," continued the major excitedly.

"Den ole Frivylous won't be admitted ter der show?"

"Cannons and caissons! do you mean to trifle with me, sir?"

"Yer don't want ter fight wid cannons, do yer?"

"The choice of weapons lies with you."

"How would stuffed clubs work?" inquired Shorty.

"This equivocation will not answer."

"Is Quiverkashun goin' ter be one of der pall-bearers?"

"No apology will be accepted," said the major pompously.

"I never drink 'fore hash, so yer must 'scuse me treatin'," said Shorty.

"Will you name your second?"

"Me name 'im! Why he's got a name already."

"Turrets and torpedoes, sir! Let me have it, then."

"He's usin' it hisself."

"Have you no one to act for you in this affair?"

"You bet. I've got a whole troupe that act for me every night. Want me ter dead-head yer in?"

"Cavalry and carbines, sir! You must have a second."

"What's der hurry. Let's take a minit."

"Whom do you refer me to?"

"To der boss of der loonatic 'sylum."

"Bloodshed and battering rams, sir! My friend will brand you as a coward if you refuse to fight."

"I guess yer mean he'll brandy hisself," codded Shorty.

"You don't know, sir, what a powder magazine you're sta-

ing over when you trifles and jests with Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort."

"All right, Cockroach. Keep yer shirt on an' don't go ter 'splodin' an' blowin' yer remains round on dis carpet an' wall-paper."

"Gods of war, sir! I shall hold you accountable for that," exclaimed the major, puffing himself up till he looked like some immense military bull-frog.

"Why don't yer talk 'bout der gin-slingers an' folks yer better 'quainted with dan der gods?" asked Shorty, tauntingly.

After he had coddled the major till he had him as mad as a hive of hornets stirred up with a stick, Shorty suddenly changed his manner and said sharply:

"Yer friend Gelley is howlin' for saterfacshun, is he?"

"He demands it."

"Wants ter fight a duel?"

"Blood must flow to wipe out the insult he has received."

"Who is his second?"

"I, Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort, will act."

"When will yer man be ready to be plugged?"

"This evening."

"Where?"

"Just outside of Georgetown."

"I have der choice of weapons?"

"You have."

"Den I'll select muzzle-loadin' smooth-bore rifles, distance fifty yards apart. Each of our guns ter be loaded an' handed ter us by der other man's second," said Shorty quickly.

"Fifty yards with rifles! Why, that is certain death!" exclaimed the major.

"Have yer man on hand at 5 P. M., sharp. My friend Shank here will act for me; an' yer bet, Cockroach, dat I'll give dat blood an' gore chum of yers all der shoot he wants ter put in his pipe," replied Shorty, firmly, and the major, finding himself unable to make other arrangements, was forced to finally agree to the terms offered and take his departure.

"Are you really in earnest, little one, about popping that old Congressional wind-bag?" asked Shanks as they passed into the breakfast room and took their seats at a small table.

"Dat's 'bout der size of it, pard," said Shorty.

"And with rifles at fifty yards?"

"You bet."

"Loaded?"

"Ye-up; one of dem loaded chock up ter der nozzle. Do yer tumble?"

"Loaded to the muzzle?"

"Wid powder; ain't yer fly?"

"Keno! I savey. The sea-sojer chap with the cockroach name's to load your gun, an' I'm to load old Stick-in-the-mud's."

"An' I want yer ter load it chock full of powder, so dat it'll kick wuss dan a government mule."

Shanks promised, and Shorty and he pitched into their breakfast in a manner that looked as if one of them at least was determined to be slaughtered with a full stomach.

After a hearty feed had been disposed of, they lit a couple of A No. 1 cigars and started out in search of a hack. Having secured one, they visited the Capitol, Presidential Mansion, Treasury, War and Navy Departments, Patent and General Post-Office and Smithsonian Institute.

On their way to the hotel they stopped at a gunsmith's, and, by leaving a deposit to cover the value, obtained a couple of old Harper's Ferry muskets.

Leaving the Arlington Hotel about 4 in the afternoon, Shorty and Shanks hailed a closed hack, and, stowing their rifles in it, ordered the driver to proceed to Georgetown.

"I guess I'll ram a few charges down this shooting-iron while I've got a chance," remarked Shanks, after they had started.

"Don't yer spare der powder," said Shorty.

"I won't be stingy," laughed Shanks as he poured about a

quarter of a pound of powder into one of the rifles and rammed it home with a wad.

On reaching the spot agreed upon, they dismissed the hackman, telling him to wait at the Georgetown House till their return. A few minutes after their arrival on the ground another carriage drove up, and the Honorable William Gelley and his friend, Major Holdfort, alighted.

"Ah, the viper is here!" exclaimed Gelley, folding a cloak around his form and leaning up against his second, with trembling knees that gave the lie to his voice.

"Don't shoot him through the heart first shot. Pop him in the lung and let him bleed to death," said Shanks in a voice which they could hear plainly.

"Oh, Lord, major, do you hear that?" muttered Gelley, turning the color of a whitewashed wall, and moving over the ground as if his feet were lead.

"I tell yer I'm right on der shoot ter-day. Reckon I'll bust him fair twixt der eyes. Dey allus croak so quick dat it saves a heap of trouble," said Shorty, audibly.

"T-t-w-i-x-t the eyes," he says," moaned Gelley, shuddering as his eyes fell on the rifles.

"Marines and muskets, sir! Be firm and cool," said the major.

"I'll be cool enough after the first shot. You won't forget the messages I left you," whispered the Honorable William.

"Cartridges and cheese knives! you can rely on me."

"Now, then, let's pace off the ground and toss for places," said Shanks, and he was stepping off the ground when Gelley said:

"Oh, major, do, for heaven's and my sake, get him to step a little longer."

"This is just about the time of day you shot that fellow through the brain in New York, ain't it?" asked Shanks, winking at Shorty.

"A little later dan dis. Didn't he flop over, though?"

"It's all up. He shot a fellow in New York and flopped him over. Oh, Lord! I'll be flopped over too!"

"Now we'll load the muskets," said Shanks, and he handed the empty one to the major, who with trembling fingers loaded one of them, putting in the ball first and the powder afterwards in his excitement.

When they had tossed for choice of place, which Shanks managed, by the aid of a double-headed penny, to win, they placed their men, and Shanks presented Gelley with his musket, while the major did the same office by Shorty.

There was another tossing of coin in the air, and then Shanks remarked:

"Gentlemen, it has fallen to me to give the word. At the word one——"

"Oh, major, tell him I'll accept of an apology of any kind."

"Stocks and war-hats! brace up, sir."

"You will raise your muskets to your shoulders——"

"I want to go home for a minute. There's a clause I forgot to put in my will," said Gelley, shaking as if he had the ague.

"Oh, won't I plug a hole through him, though," said Shorty.

"At the word two," continued Shanks, "you will——"

"I'll apologize; I'll get down on my knees and beg everybody's pardon; only I don't and can't leave my constituency that elected me," groaned Gelley, shakily.

"Tampions and traitors! Be a man, sir," exclaimed his second.

"As I was saying, at the word 'two' you will cock your pieces and take aim," explained Shanks.

"How're yer, Creedmoor?" laughed Shorty.

"Can't this thing be stopped somehow before I'm murdered?" demanded Gelley, sitting down on a stone and looking faintly around him.

"Battalions and bulls-eyes! Keep a stiff backbone, sir," advised the major.

"Oh, it's easy enough for you that ain't going to be shot through the heart and brain and lungs to say keep a stiff

backbone; I'll be stiff enough all over pretty soon to suit you," gasped Gelly.

"To continue, at the word three——"

"Dat's der one I want," said Shorty.

"That's the funeral preparation," sighed Gelly.

"You will both fire at once——"

"Give me as fine a funeral as you can; don't spare expense. Oh, Lord, what did I ever let myself get into such a scrape as this for?" sobbed the congressman.

"Regiments and revolvers! Keep a stiff upper lip."

"Go on wid der show. I want ter get back, after polishing dis fellow off, in time for my show."

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" exclaimed Shanks.

"Ready!" said Shorty.

"Give me time to say a little prayer."

"Knapsacks and bayonet-scabbards! Keep cool and aim at his heart."

"One!"

"Oh, Lordy, Lordy!" gasped the Honorable William, bringing his musket slowly up.

"Two!"

"Hold on! hold on! I'll pay any damages you want, only don't shoot!" bawled Gelly.

They gave him a drink of brandy, braced him up, and he said a short prayer, shut both eyes, and pointing his musket at the blue sky above him, awaited the fatal number.

"Three!"

There was a report as if a powder magazine had exploded, and the Honorable William was observed to try and kick a hole in the sky, and failing, to subside in a shrieking, bruised, frightened, sore and torn heap of humanity, while the major, whom the musket had struck on the shins, was dancing around swearing military oaths like a patent machine.

"I'm gone! shot through the heart! Oh, have mercy on me, and put me out of my agony," groaned Gelly, writhing on the ground, fully convinced that he had been shot.

"By the battering rams of the ancients, I believe my leg's broke!" howled the major.

"Want any more satisfaction?" inquired Shorty, laughing himself nearly inside out.

"Don't talk to a dying man," said Gelly, faintly.

Shorty and Shanks started back to Georgetown, laughing heartily over their racket, and leaving the war-like marine officer and his weak-kneed principal to recover at their leisure. On their arrival at the Georgetown House they found the hack waiting for them, and entering it were driven speedily back to the city.

"What d'yer say if we scoop in der president's reception ter-night?" asked Shorty, as they were eating their supper and listening to the newsboys shouting:

"Hextra edition! 'Washington Chronicle,' full 'count of der great duel 'tween a Member of Congress an' Shorty!"

"Don't news travel fast?" asked Shanks.

"You bet; what dem reporters don't know ain't worth knowin'."

"How are we going to fix about the show?"

"Oh, dat's all fixed. I put a song an' dance down in place of my act," said Shorty.

After supper they adjourned to their rooms, made a stunning toilet, and having spruced themselves up, called a carriage and ordered the driver to take them to the White House.

On their arrival at the presidential mansion they left their carriage, and following a number who were passing in, soon found themselves in the "blue-room," where the president stood receiving.

"What name did you say?" inquired the President on Shorty being presented.

"Shorty," said his excellency's son, who was doing the honors.

"Ah, well the people are not apt to be short of fun when you are around, from what I've heard," said the President, shaking our hero's hand warmly.

"I ain't much company for a funeral gang, dat's a fact," replied Shorty.

"Make a better stump speaker to a Baltimore audience, hey? When I run for my second term I must secure you to stump for me," observed his excellency, laughing heartily.

"Dat's a bargain, if der oder side don't want me ter run for President 'gainst yer; 'cause if they did I couldn't toot yer horn worth a clam," said Shorty.

Here his son leaned over and whispered a moment with his father, and the President burst out into a hearty laugh, and still holding fast to our hero's hand, said:

"What's this terrible bloodthirsty story I hear about your slaughtering our honorable legislators and brave marine officer defenders?"

"Guess dat snoozer was at der wrong end of der gun ter be slaughtered."

"Don't you know you've broken the laws of the land in fighting a duel?" asked the President, quizzically.

"As der wasn't nuthin' but powder in der guns, I thort I'd only cracked der laws."

"You're a comical character, I can see that, but I fear I'll have to put you under bonds and promises not to exterminate any more of our congressmen."

"Dere's heaps of people out 'er which you kin make more of but for der sake of der constitutionarys, I promise," said Shorty.

"Ha, ha! very good; call on me whenever you are in Washington. Always glad to meet you. Wish I had you in the cabinet. We would have some fun once in a while," observed the President.

"Cabinet? I ain't much on der furniture biz, so I guess I'll stick ter der banjo for a while," answered Shorty, and the President burst out laughing, and shaking Shorty once more heartily by the hands, let him pass on.

After passing through and admiring the blue, red and east rooms, Shorty and Shanks went back to the hotel, well pleased with their reception at the White House.

The next morning all the papers came out with displayed headings and full accounts of the great duel and all Washington shook its sides during the day with laughter over it, and at night the street leading to Ford's Opera House, where the New York Minstrels were performing, was blocked by an impatient, eager throng, anxious to catch a glimpse of the famous Shorty.

After a week's performance in the "City of Magnificent Distances," to houses such as never before had greeted a minstrel troupe, Shorty gave the word to pack up and light out, and the next morning found the company speeding on their way toward Pittsburg.

The trip between the places proved an uneventful one; the boys amused themselves by singing, joking and codding each other, and everybody that chose to take a hand, or rather, tongue, in.

Arriving in Pittsburg, they proceeded to the Monongahela House, where a magnificent suite of apartments had been set aside for their coming.

After indulging in a good wash, and lightening themselves of the dust from their journey in the cars, Shorty and Shanks strolled down to the Pittsburg Opera House, where they had arranged to open, and took a squint over the building, returning to the hotel in time for a good square meal.

CHAPTER VII.

We left our friends Shorty and Shanks taking a look at the Opera House, Pittsburg, where the company were billed to open that evening. After seeing that all the necessary arrangements for the performance had been made, they strolled back to the Monongahela House, where they found the rest of

the troupe sitting in the smoking-room, chatting and telling comical stories of their minstrel careers.

"Guess who's in the city, boss?" said Dave Reed, on their entering the room and joining them.

"Oh, dere's lots of folks. I saw seven men, six women, three boys, a fat peeler, a bob-tailed dorg, a lame mule, a yaller street-car, an' a striped barber pole myself," answered Shorty, jestingly.

"Pshaw! I ain't joking. It's some persons that you'll be astonished to learn are here," said Dave.

"Tain't my rich parients come ter look for dere long-lost son, Shorty, wid der strawberry shortcake mark on his left heel? Speak, vilyun! an' lemme go haul off my socks and trim my toenails 'fore 'tis ter late!" exclaimed Shorty, tragically, and every one present burst out laughing as he stamped across the floor and struck an imploring attitude before Dave Reed.

"You're sure it wasn't the Grand Duke Alexis inquiring for me?" said Shanks.

"No, nor a cop either inquirin' for you," laughed Dave.

"Did she have pink eyes an' a number two bustle?" asked one of the others.

"What sized mouth did she wear?" asked another.

"It wasn't a she, an' as for mouths, there ain't nothin' outside of a laughin' alligator can touch you on the mouth question," retorted Dave.

"It wasn't any lovely blue-eyed angel of a child dat wanted ter claim me for it's daddy, 'count of der strikin' likeness? 'cause I ain't ter home ter such snides," inquired Shorty.

"No."

"Or Bonaparte at the battle of Bunker Hill?" suggested one of the boys.

"Yer 'bout as near it as Bonaparte was."

"Is it for us all to guess at?" asked another.

"Yes."

"Is ther answer, I can't tell a whopper. I cut it wid my little pane of blue glass?" asked Shorty.

"I've got it! The answer's 'cause he can't climb a tree," said Shanks.

"Sugar, you blokes wouldn't tumble to it in seventeen years of Sundays, so I may as well tell you."

"Generous, noble-hearted comrade," said the song and dance man.

"We're all ears, like a Chicago mule," said Shanks.

"Bounce it out of yer 'fore it sticks in yer craw," chimed in Shorty.

"Bring it out easy now."

"Break the news gently."

"Oh, give us a breeze," said Dave. "Well, what d'you say to your old gang being here, stopping at the Merchants' Hotel an' billed to play to-morrow night at Canterbury Hall?"

"Dey here! Who's runnin' der gang?" asked Shorty.

"Polly."

"Who'd yer see?"

"Charley Pettingill."

"And they're going to run against us?" asked Shanks.

"That's what's the matter, Pettingill said. Polly told the boys he was going to take the starch out of this crowd."

"Big job they've contracted for," remarked Shanks.

"All der starch dem hamfatters can squeeze out of dis crowd won't stiffen dere eyelashes," said Shorty, contemptuously.

"It'll be a case of 'Polly wants a (joke) cracker,' to help him get off something funny," said the song and dance man.

"Or, 'Polly won't yer cry me oh,'" suggested Dave Reed.

"Snide old place they're opening in, if they're going to go into the starchin' business," said Tambo.

"Who's Polly got wid him in der gang?" asked Shorty.

"Same old lot of heelers you used to travel with, with one or two exceptions."

"Chance if dey don't put up some racket on us at der show ter-night; dem blokes hates me like stewed pizen, an'll try an' get square wid me fust chance dey gets. So yer fellers

want ter keep yer starboard eyes peeled ter-night for 'em; do yer pootiest and don't lose yer tempers if they do try it," explained Shorty.

"Hold mine with both hands," said one of the boys.

"I guess they'll find they ain't got hold of no muffin nine when they tackle and try to scoop in the New York Minstrels," observed another.

"Dey're foolin' with a hornet's nest when der stinger's famerly's all' ter home."

"Yes, or caressing a mule's hind leg—a rather ticklish and short-lived business," said Shanks.

"All the racket them 'fly-by-nights' can start won't make me look pale when I get under my burnt cork," said Tambo.

"Dát's yer war paint, ain't it?" asked Shorty, laughingly.

"Yes; and when I'm on the war-path I can 'bring down the house' and scalp the gal-lery."

"En-cores you can."

"All rite, bullies; only don't let 'em snoozers put yer out, or yer'll never hear der las' of it."

"We won't, boss," answered the troupe; and, after absorbing something soothing at the bar, Shorty went up to his room accompanied by Shanks, feeling confident that any racket or job that Polly's company could put up would miss fire and recoil upon their own heads, now that his boys were on their guard.

Shorty's duel in Washington had been copied in full by the Pittsburg papers, and the Smoky City boys turned out in good old-fashioned style to catch a glimpse of the smallest, and at the same time greatest practical joker in the United States.

"A full house, boys," said Shanks, peeping through the hole in the curtain before it was rung up.

"Lemme take a squint 'roun till I see 'fi can spot any of dem flip-flappers," said Shorty, scrambling on the chair and looking searchingly around the well-filled house. "Yes, dey're here, an' he's got 'em strung all 'round der house. I dropped on ter one in der parquet, tumbled ter two in der gallery, dere's one—two—three in der orchestra chairs, an' der rest scattered 'round. Look out for danger when der bell rings, boys."

The curtain rang up, and the New York Minstrels made their evening bow to a Pittsburg audience amidst considerable clapping of hands.

The first part passed off quietly and swimmingly, the boys letting themselves loose, as they felt they were acting before a rival company, who would be only too happy to grab at the smallest slip up. The songs and jokes were new, most of them having been composed for the company, and they were heartily applauded, the curtain finally dropping on the first part without any demonstration from the opposition troupe.

"I don't trust dem duffers furder den I can chuck a bull by der tail. Shouldn't wonder, Dave, if dey'd give yer a breeze when yer show up," remarked Shorty to Dave Reed, who was standing in the wings ready dressed for his song and dance act, which came next on the programme.

"I'll risk der blowin' dis cherub off his number 'leven feet," laughed Dave, tripping upon the stage.

He had scarcely made his salaam before a loud "M-i-o-u-w!" rang out from the gallery, proving the correctness of Shorty's prophecy.

Dave kept right on with his song without even glancing in the direction the interruption came from.

"M-i-o-u-w! m-i-o-u-w!" squealed a voice in another part of the house, and the audience craned their necks and tried in vain to catch a glimpse of the interrupter.

Dave kept steadily on with his act, paying no attention to the cat-calls, hisses, or attempts made to put him out, and wound up amidst a tumult of cheers, applause and hisses.

"Hol' on, boys, till I giv' dem cat-howlin' plums out dere a chance ter get in dere chin music on dis chicken," said Shorty, darting into the dressing-room and emerging a few moments later in his old plantation rig, with his famous banjo, which

had done so much to make him a reputation, slung over his shoulder.

His appearance, as usual, was the signal for three hearty rounds of applause, which Shorty acknowledged by ducking his head, and then, picking up his banjo, he was thrumming it preparatory to singing, when from twenty different parts of the house rang out:

"M-e-o-w!"

"Bow-wow-wow!"

"Baa-baa-baa-a!"

"Cluck-cluck-cluck!"

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

"Hiss-s-s-s-s!"

"Wite folks, lemme interjuce ter yer notis der poultry yard, run by a polly parrot, an' wid more geese an' sheep in der menagerie dan dere is minstrels," said Shorty, climbing up on a chair and making himself heard above the tumult.

"Three cheers and a tiger for Shorty and his boss troupe!" proposed some one in the audience, and they were given with a will that showed the sympathy of the house was with him.

"Once more der procession will move," said Shorty. Seating himself and picking his banjo he sang:

"Now, wite fokes, all dis am a pity,
An' what I'se gwine ter say is so;
We boys come from New York city
An' don't take a back seat for der odder show."

The audience, knowing by the posters on the fences that a rival company were in town, saw the point at once, and treated it with hearty applause.

"Shorty, where's your monkey?" yelled one, as he was about rattling off a second verse.

"Oh, Polly's got a monkey dat he used ter pay a salary, I guess he mus' hav' skipped 'im an' got up in der gallery. If any of yer boys'll catch 'im an' cram 'im in a strait-jacket, Der show it'll go on an' dat'll end his racket."

sang Shorty, composing it as he went along, and bringing down the house by so doing.

"Hiss-s-s-s-s-s!" hissed out from a dozen different places.

"New an' 'riginal interruption by der trained minstrel geese, who, like der jackass in der lion's skin, neber open dere pester traps but dey put dere feet in 'em," observed Shorty.

"Fire 'em out," said one of the audience.

"I cum ter see dis yere show, an' I'll mash der next snoozer dat tries ter stop der masheen runnin'," said a bix six-foot sport, jumping up in his seat and glaring around.

"Let's bounce 'em," suggested another.

"If they don't want to see the show, let 'em climb."

"Bust der fust clam in der bugle that tries any more snide games on der New Yorkers," said a deep voice in the gallery.

"Bust it is," echoed a dozen others around him who had come to enjoy the performance, and did not intend to have it spoiled by any crowd that might have roped themselves in for that purpose.

"Go on, little one; we'll see yer thro', an' if dem hamfatters want ter live long 'nuff ter show in dis town, dey'd better git up and glue dere mouths," said the big sport, rolling up his sleeves and loosening his shirt collar significantly.

"Der circus will now proceed," said Shorty, and he dashed into a song, composing as he went along, in which he managed to bring in all the rival troupe, with their especial weaknesses, in a manner so comical that it took like the small-pox, and he received an encore that made the windows rattle and put the fear of annihilation into the hearts of the gang.

The rest of the performance passed off as smoothly as a skating pond; the boys braced themselves to do their prettiest and succeeded, receiving rounds of well-merited applause as their reward, and by the time the curtain dropped on the last act had won a place in the hearts of the boys of Pittsburgh never before held by any minstrel troupe.

"Well, Shorty, them fellers got kicked by their own gun, didn't they?" asked Shanks, as they were walking back to the hotel that evening after the show was over.

"Dem hamfatters never could put up a racket worth shucks; dey thort dey had a soft snap when dey tackled us ter-nite, but dey let both feet slip when dey calkerlated der New York gang were goin' ter weaken," said Shorty.

"That was some of Polly's work. I s'pose he's got his back up over his ears 'cause you've got a live troupe of your own and he can't boss you around."

"He'll be glad 'nuff ter get his back down again 'fore I get thro' wid 'im and his gang of hamfatters."

"Going to put up a racket on him in return?"

"You bet."

"Count me in."

"O K, pard. Mum's der word, tho', till I get der racket cooked."

"I won't squeal."

Reaching the Monongahela Hotel, they lit a couple of cigars and entering the billiard room, amused themselves knocking the balls around, Shorty and Shanks playing partners against Dave Reed and Tambo, and managing to stick them for the drinks, cigars and games by their superior play, then partaking of a nightcap at the bar, they mosied off to bed and were soon in the arms of the sleepy god Morpheus.

The next morning they sent around to a livery stable, engaged a hack, and spent the largest part of the day driving around Pittsburg and Alleghany City, visiting the immense manufactories of iron, glass, steel, and copper, and watching the thousands of workmen flitting around through the glare of the fiery furnaces like so many modern editions of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

"A feller dat lived two days in dis smoky place wouldn't have ter use any burnt cork on his mug when he went 'fore der footlights," observed Shorty, looking at his shirt bosom and collar, which had been white and clean in the morning, and now presented a nigrinous, sooty appearance.

"There ought to be about seven more rivers and forty wash-women to the man to keep a feller white," replied Shanks.

"It may be a red-hot old town, but it's mos' too much like squintin' up a smoky chimney ter suit dis canary," remarked Shorty, gazing around at the heavy pall of smoke which hung over the city, and through which the church spires stuck out like exclamation marks.

"Then again there appears to be no scarcity of bridges connecting it with Alleghany, as this is the seventh we've crossed to my certain knowledge."

"Guess dey wanted ter make an abridged edition of a city out of it," suggested Shorty, wittily.

Returning to the hotel, they disrobed and amused themselves for a half an hour scrubbing the soot and dirt off their faces.

The rival troupe opened to a fair house the first evening; but as their acts and songs were all old and stale, the attendance dropped off nightly, and as they were billed for a two-week engagement, it looked as if the last of it would find them playing to empty benches.

Day after day passed without Shorty making any further allusion to the racket he proposed putting up on them, and Shanks was wondering if he had given up the idea, when Saturday morning, as they sat down to the breakfast table, Shorty suddenly remarked:

"Dem hamfatters am goin' ter hav' a matinee dis afternoon, ain't dey?"

"Yes."

"Den we'll pay dem a visit."

"You and I?"

"Tell der whole gang dat I'll 'spect 'em ter be ready ter 'tend der matinee dis afternoon, an' dat I want every one of dem ter rig hisself up in a high plug hat, an' come up ter my room an' we'll all waltz down dere together," said Shorty, and he sent

out and secured reserved seats, and ordered a bushel of hickory nuts sent to his room.

Punctual to time the boys all put in an appearance at Shorty's room, each one sporting a plug hat.

"Now, fellers, dem snoozers 're so fond of starting a racket on us der oder night an' I want ter see how dey like one in return," said Shorty.

"That's what's the matter."

"Let's get square; den dey won't have' der laugh on us."

"Bully for you, Shorty. Whoop 'em up a dish," said Dave Reed.

"I've got reserved seats here for der whole crowd of us; an' in der fust place I want yer all ter take off yer plugs and fill dem up wid dem hickory nuts, an' den stick 'em on yer heads 'gain," said Shorty.

The men laughingly complied, and half a peck or so of nuts was loaded into each man's hat.

"Der seats is scattered here an' dere thro' der house an' I want yer fellers ter go in quietly, plank yerselves in yer seats, an' keep yer hats on; don't take 'em off, no matter what 'dey say," explained Shorty, and the boys, smelling the rat he had caged, promised to help him all in their power to get square with their rivals, and, after a few more directions, they started off for Canterbury Hall.

On entering they found the house about two-thirds full and the performance about to commence, and making their way to their seats in different parts of the building, they quietly seated themselves with their hats on.

Polly, who had been looking out from one side of the curtain, was at first surprised when he saw such a respectable, gentlemanly party enter in a body, but his surprise turned to consternation and rage when he saw, by the aid of an opera glass, who they were.

"Ten thousand devils! Here's Shorty an' his whole infernal gang, an' I'll be everlasting hanged if I don't expect he'll pull the hall down about our ears with some of his darned rackets!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

"Why don't they take off their hats?" asked Charley Pettigill.

"Go around and tell the ushers to make every mother's son of them take off their hats!" he exclaimed to a call boy, who flew off to do his errand.

The next minute the curtain went up and the company made their bow and squatted.

"Remove those hats!" said Polly, advancing to the footlights, and shaking his finger threateningly at Shorty.

"I allus wear my plug in dis kind of a snide show, so I won't have any snoozer freeze ter it," replied our hero, coolly.

"Take off them hats!"

"As yer previously remarked."

"I command you to remove them!"

"Command yer own hamfatters, fer yer can't command one toenail of der New Yorkers."

"I'll have you turned into the streets!"

"Wake me up when der operation comes off."

"Ushers!" shouted Polly, purple in the face, to his assistants, who were scampering around the building like long-legged grasshoppers and ranging themselves alongside of the hatted gentlemen.

"Yes, sir! yes, sir!" they answered.

"See that those fellows remove their hats!" commanded Polly, while the audience leaned back and watched the proceedings, feeling certain there was some fun in it as long as Shorty had a finger in the pie.

"Plaze, sur, take off yer hat?" said a brawny, big fellow, placing himself alongside of Shorty.

"Dat's exactly what dis clothespin don't mean ter do."

"Yez won't? Begorra, I'll make yez!"

"I don't mean ter get my head cold," said Shorty, glancing up comically at the giant standing over him.

"Knock them off if they don't comply," commanded Polly, nearly frothing at the mouth.

"Will yez be afther takin' it off?" demanded the man.

"Nixy off."

"Jerk those hats off, or I'll discharge every one of you!" ordered Polly, and the men, obedient to his command, grabbed at the objectionable plug hats, lifting them clear off their owners' heads, and a second later there was a racket that shook the windows as the nuts poured down and rattled over the floor, while the audience went off in perfect shrieks of laughter at the cunning way Shorty had returned the racket and got square with his rivals; but the most astonished and comical-looking persons were Polly and his assistants; the latter, having dropped the hats, stood gazing, open-mouthed, at them, as if they were bewitched, while Polly stormed up and down the stage and tried to make himself heard above the shouts of laughter.

As soon as the cheers and applause had somewhat subsided, Shorty and his party left the house quietly and allowed Polly's show to proceed; but the backbone had been taken out of the

performers by the sell that had been played upon them, and the acting was weak as skimmed milk.

Two days after the above racket the New York Minstrels closed one of the most successful engagements ever played in Pittsburg, and got ready to leave, amidst the regrets of the play-going public to whom they had attached themselves by their good acting and behavior.

Packing up their traps, they took a farewell smile with their many admirers and friends, and bouncing the Pennsylvania Railroad, once more were soon being whirled away to Cincinnati, which was the next show town on their route.

The company had a quiet and uneventful trip between the two cities, passing the early part of the evening in singing and joking, and seeking the sleeping-car to rest themselves when they got tired.

It was about two P. M. of a Tuesday afternoon when they arrived at Cincinnati, and found a stage waiting at the depot ready to convey them to the Burnett House, where the advance agent had secured rooms for them.

CHAPTER VIII.

It did not take that crowd long to make themselves at home, no matter where they were, and five minutes after their arrival in the building they had registered their names, shook hands with the clerk, interviewed the proprietor, inspected their apartments, smiled with the barkeeper, and winked at the pretty chambermaids, found out all the fresh gossip floating around, tossed dice for the cigars, and didn't seem half busy at that.

"Oh, I've come back to Cin once more," sang Dave Reed, planting himself in a chair by the window facing on Vine street.

"'Course everybody sins twice in Cin-cin-nati," said Tambo, foolingly.

"Twice twenty won't cover your list, Tambo," said Shanks.

"It is a base alligator to destroy the prospects of a rising celebrity in the profession," he replied, standing up on his chair.

Shorty touched him under the coat-tail with a pin point, and he sprang wildly over the back of the seat and clapped his hands behind in so comical and suggestive a manner that every one present roared with laughter, while poor Tambo looked quite undecided whether he'd join them or not.

This trifling thing seemed to give Shorty an idea for a racket, so beckoning Shanks to him, they went out and found their way to one of the largest toy stores in the city, where the former purchased two of those immense French toy spiders which are affixed to an invisible hair, and they returned to the hotel.

On their way back Shorty explained to Shanks how the racket was to be worked, and told him to post some of the cutest of the troupe while he looked up a party to play it on.

The moment he entered the smoking-room Shorty dropped to a couple of stout, hearty, well-to-do farmers, who had come into the city in reference to some pork contract. They were sitting over by the window with their chairs tipped back, smoking long pipes and calculating on the chances of a rise in pigs, when Shorty, reaching over with his cane tip, to which he had fastened a pin, jabbed him suddenly behind, then passed quietly on in his walk.

"Everlasting corncobs!" yelled the man who had been stuck, springing wildly from his chair and glancing around.

"What's der matter wid yer now? Got der cramps?" asked Shorty, stopping in his walk and addressing the excited farmer, who was stamping on the floor and feeling around under his coat-tails.

"Cramps be darned! Somebody lanced me right here!" exclaimed the farmer, lifting his coat-tail and pointing to the spot, amidst the roars of laughter of everybody present.

"Lanced yer? Oh, go bathe yer head," advised Shorty.

"Sit down, neighbor; do please sit down; you shouldn't let little things like that excite you," said his friend, who had been watching him with amazement.

"Excite fiddlesticks! I guess it'd excite you to have one them same little things stuck into you."

"I'll bet it was a tarantula bit yer," suggested Shorty.

"Who bit me?"

"A tarantula."

"Well, if Tearin' Tuler, or whatever you call him, wants to do any more bitin', I want him to practice on some o'e else 'cept me," said the farmer, resuming his chair, and a few minutes later they were getting back to the hog-rasing topic again, when Shorty walked by, leaning on Shanks's arm.

It took some time to quiet the old fellows down, but at last, seeing them interested in their subject Shorty and Shanks strolled carelessly up, and as they came behind the farmers

the former suddenly whipped out one of his immense toy spiders he had purchased, and which he had fastened to the end of his cane, and holding it over their heads let it dangle for a second in their faces, then quickly whipped it out of sight. Shanks in the meantime had treated the other farmer to a jab behind with the pin.

"Suffering hayrakes! What in thunder was that?" exclaimed farmer number two, springing out of his chair and dancing around the floor.

"Lord knows! Don't ask me."

"Great gallinippers! Why, he scooped a mouthful out of my thigh with teeth that seemed to be six inches long, and sharp as pincers."

"Tarantula," said Shorty, simply.

"Taran the devil! Why, one of those darned things would eat a man up."

"They are kind of thick to-night. I've noticed several of them moving around on the ceilings; but they'll all get quieted down after they've had a feed," chimed in Shanks.

"I'll be hanged if they're going to get any feed off me. I came down here to sell hogs, not to be eaten up by spiders as big as cheese boxes."

Just then Shorty, who was standing directly behind him, let the squirming, wriggling, clawing thing down in front of his face so that the claws of it tickled his nose.

"Hello! Stop him! Here he is again! Shoot him, somebody!" exclaimed the old farmer, pulling off his hat and heaving it at the spider, which Shorty immediately jerked out of sight, while the lookers-on laughed till they were sore at the fun.

"Nuther tarantula, wasn't it?" asked Shorty, a moment later.

"Great thrashing machines! I should say it was Tearin' Tuler's granddaddy himself."

"Whisky's the only remedy known for their bite," observed Shanks.

"Dat's der only thing ter save 'em," said Shorty.

"Let's hasten to absorb some whisky then, neighbor Goodwood."

And the badly-scared pair made a break for the bar, where they absorbed so much whisky that an hour later they were observed hugging each other and shouting for somebody to bring on a tarantula if they wanted to see it whipped.

The National Theatre, or the "Old Drury," of Cincinnati, as it is called, was well filled to greet the New York Minstrels on their opening night. The boys did well and received plenty of applause. Shorty made a hit in a new song called "A Trip Across the Rhine," bringing down the house. Taken all in all, the performance was a good one, the audience well pleased and the treasury showing a handsome balance over all expenses.

"Pretty good for old Cincinnati," remarked Shanks, as they left the theatre for a knock around the city before turning in.

"You bet, dat was a good, solid payin' old house dere ter-night. A feller dat'd grumble at der crowd would kick a hen 'cause she didn't lay her eggs already boiled," answered Shorty, balancing his cane lightly on his forefinger, to the disgust of an old gentleman who was passing, and who expected to see it drop on his nose.

After scooping in all the billiard halls, keno layouts, tenpin alleys and gay places about town, Shorty and Shanks started back to the hotel. They were meandering quietly along Vine street when Shanks suddenly stopped and pointed to a billboard on which was printed a notice that the rival show would open at Melodeon Hall the next night.

"Dem hamfatters are follerin' up our tracks ter close ter suit this oyster. I thought they'd pull out an' drop on themselves after dat las' racket in Pittsburg; but I s'pose dey think dey can bust in an' scoop in half der crowd by layin' close ter us," remarked Shorty.

"Once burnt, twice shy, don't appear to work in their case; one thing certain, if they go to putting up any more jobs on our crowd, they'll find it'll be twice burnt," said Shanks.

"I don't see how dey're goin' ter get der chance ter give us much of a racket, if dey open ter-morrer night, as dey're billed for," observed Shorty, thoughtfully.

"Don't their show shut up some three-quarters of an hour before ours does?"

"Dat's so, by crickey!"

"You could cut down our programme so as to close about the same time and still have a rousing bill," suggested Shanks.

"Cut down nothin'; I wouldn't cut der printer's name off der bottom of der programme if dere were fifty hamfattin' gangs howlin' fur fifty years; dat's der kind of sausage-meat I am," said Shorty, so pluckily that Shanks clapped his hands at his little partner's gameness.

Arriving at the hotel shortly afterwards, they found the rest of the troupe, and communicated to them the news.

"Comirg here to open to-morrow?" inquired Tambo.

"I call that crowding the mourners," said Dave Reed.

"Do they want to 'tend another nutting party?" asked another.

"Where are they going to play at?"

"Melodeon Hall."

"Oh, I know the crib; it's a dumpy show they're going ter run down there."

"One thing dead sure, they mustn't break in on any more of my song and dances, or they'll find I'll break in on some of them," said Dave Reed.

"Now, fellers, I want ter tell yer all one thing. Dat hamfattin' crowd hav' cluded ter play in der same towns at der same time wid us—dat's all rite; der country's open ter any one, only dere used ter be an understood thing dat rival companies wouldn't show at der same time 'cept by accident. Now dem hamfattin' snoozers dey tried ter put up a job on us in Pittsburg, but we blocked der wheels from der word 'go,' an' paid dem off wid a racket dat took der starch out of dere collars, dat squared us; if dey want ter come out 'ere an' run a quiet shebang, 'course dey've a rite ter do it," remarked Shorty, talking slowly and convincingly.

"But s'pose dey ain't satisfied an' tries ter start another job on us?" inquired Shanks.

"Der sequel to dat will be found in der next chapter," replied Shorty, so humorously that everybody roared.

The next morning our little hero and his inseparable companion, Shanks, had a hack sent to the door and started off for a drive around the city, visiting Eden, Washington, Lincoln, and Hopkins Parks, the Cincinnati observatory, and the water works. After leaving them they drove to one of the largest pork-packing houses, and were very much interested and amused at the neatness and dexterity with which a dozen, hundred or thousand full-grown, able-bodied porkers are disposed of.

"Dey comes in wid a fresh started grunt in der mous, an' fore dey get der las' of dat grunt dey're bein' stuffed inter sausage skins an' der tail end of der grunt catches yer as dey're tyin' up der skins," said Shorty to the proprietor, who was showing them around.

"That's the quickest illustration of the case I ever listened to," laughed their host, and after thanking him kindly for the courtesy he had shown them, Shorty presented him with half a dozen of the best seats in the house for that night.

Leaving him, they drove across the Miami Canal and found themselves in the famous quarter known as "Over the Rhine."

No English being spoken in this quarter, it was comical to see Shorty and Shanks airing their German.

Stopping in front of a very pretty garden, they alighted, and seating themselves at a table, were soon waited on by a pretty, blue-eyed German girl.

"Vouley vous some of," began Shanks.

"Oh, cheese dat—dat ain't German," said Shorty; "lemme talk to der gal. Nix cumberouse, give us zwie lager—savy?"

The girl managed to gather an idea of what was required, and returned in a few minutes with a couple of foaming stone mugs.

"What's der matter wid yer? Didn't I know dat my German is said ter be der best in der Bowery, New York? Why, I speak it so good I thort of givin' lessons in it," exclaimed Shorty, jubilantly.

The mugs were soon emptied, and Shorty insisted on setting them up again, along with the cigars, for the privilege of airing his German again.

"I vants to speak mit yer, missy; fill 'em up again; plenty beer, nixy froth, an' yer may fetch us zwie of yer best cigars. Don't yer try an' stick any of yer Jersey cabbage cheroots onto us—forsta?"

The girl didn't forsta by a long chalk, and Shorty went into a broken English statement of their wants; then Shanks mustered his few words of bad French and attacked her, but was forced to give up at the end of fifteen minutes and lean his head on his beer mug. Suddenly Shorty thought of a bright idea, and sticking up his fingers he commenced the deaf and dumb language; but the girl fled in terror and summoned three old women, who after long and exhausting signals, made them understand that beer was wanted, and they sipped it in simple silence when they received it, paid their reckoning, treated the driver, and started back to Cincinnati.

"I say, Shanks, yer needn't say anythin' 'bout my speakin' dat German, or der deaf an' dumb biz, ter any one. 'cause if der fellers got hold on it dey'd never let up on a bloke," said Shorty after a long pause.

"All right, Shorty, my boy; I'll be as dumb as a drum with a hole in it; an', by the way, maybe it'd be better if you wouldn't mention my talking French, 'cause somehow or other I appear to have forgot some of the words, and the thing didn't work worth a cent," replied Shanks.

Their eyes met and both burst out in a hearty laugh.

"Shake, pard," laughed Shorty.

"Put it there, little one," said Shanks, and after a hearty and warm shake of hands they changed the subject.

On their way back to the hotel they met Manager Polly and Pejingill standing at the door of the Galt House, corner of Sixth and Main streets, and bowed graciously to them, but received no answering salute.

After a splendidly served supper the troupe proceeded to the theatre, and found that the Buckeye boys of Porkopolis had turned out en masse to welcome the visitors from the Empire State, and the "Old Drury," with its immense seating capacity, was crowded from orchestra to roof.

The boys did well, and the opening part was splendidly rendered, act following act along without a jar or a bungle, and the audience expressed their delight by long and often-repeated rounds of applause.

"Half an hour more an' the show'll be over," said Shanks, who was standing at a side scene.

"But we ain't goin' ter get over dat half hour widout an interrupshun," replied Shorty, who had, by closely scrutinizing through an opera-glass, detected a party that had just entered and were standing up at the extreme back part of the house.

"Why, do you see anything?"

"Yee up, I see more dan half of Polly's gang strung 'long der wall back dere. Yer can see der reason dat I put my monkey act way down ter der foot, so's I could hev der stage when der racket comes off," continued Shorty.

"Oh, mebbe they didn't come to give us a roast, but only to pick up some fresh gags of ours to use," said Tambo.

"Yer must be pretty fresh yerself ter think anything of that kind," answered Shorty.

"Then you think there's some dodge in the wind?" asked Shanks.

"I'd bet a thousand dollars 'gainst a hole in der heel of my socks dat dere is," said Shorty; then, turning to a couple of double clog and dance men who were waiting for the bell to ring them on, he continued: "I want dem feet of your'n ter move same as der band of music was in dem, an' not in the orchestra. Mind your p's an' q's an' yer biz, an' let 'em howl blue blazes if der want ter."

The bell tingled, and the clog dancers ran out, hand in hand, and bowed amidst much applause, while Shorty ran off to his dressing-room to slip on his monkey dress.

The double clog was well done and received an encore, and the act passed off without the sign of an interruption, so that even Shorty's belief in the other troupe being there for mischief was somewhat shaken.

The next was Shorty's famous monkey act, the one in which you will remember they put up the racket on him in Buffalo, and he knew it would irritate them to see him in it, as it was a part in which he was unapproachable. Therefore, no sooner had he bounded upon the stage than the whole house roared, and he was starting into his part when a half-maudlin man was seen walking down the centre aisle to the stage, where he carefully deposited a box, and said:

"Doze gemmens zat gib me ze box wans youze to zopen zit zon the stage."

"Yes, open it, Jocko," shouted one of the audience.

"Open it!" roared a hundred voices.

"Boys, if yer'll jest shut yer mouth an' give yer ears a chance, I'll open it for yer. Fust while der carpenter is comin' let me read this ter yer."

"A new star desires an engagement in yer troupe, as he thinks he would be at home."

The crowd laughed heartily, as crowds who are on the anxious seat always do, and the carpenter arriving with a hammer and chisel, removed the lid and disclosed to Shorty a little dead six-week-old shoat of a pig.

Shorty knew that to hesitate a second was to be lost, and seizing the little pig in his arms, he held it up before the audience and exclaimed:

"Run, half a dozen of yer, ter Manager Polly, an' tell him his child has kicked der bucket!"

The point was given at the very second, and the audience screamed, shouted, roared, yelled, applauded, and made the walls of the National tremble.

"Gemmens," exclaimed Shorty, grabbing the tiny pig in his arms and scrambling up on the back of the chair, where he pretended to be nursing it, "I hold in my arms der natural offspring of der manager of der snide minstrels. Every feeling heart from Maine ter der Pacific will shudder at der cold-blooded desire to refuse his own child a proper funeral. Yer needn't sneak off dere, Mister Polly, wid yer hamfatters, 'cause yer hear a few solid ol' trufs."

"Fetch 'em ter de front."

"They'd better go sling mud at themselves."

"Let's see der gang anyhow."

"Gemmens," said Shorty, after he could make himself heard amongst the uproar, "dat's der second racket of dem snoozers, an' in each of dem dey got such an old-fashion'd bilkin' dat I guess dey'll commence ter take a tumble ter demselves an' lite out of here. Der show will now wag 'long."

And it did wag along; it wagged along amidst such thun-

ders of applause that the watchmen and policemen blocks away thought it was a riot, and were badly sold when, after rapping and signaling a posse from the nearest station-houses, to find it was only a tribute of appreciation being bestowed by the Buckeye boys to their Eastern brethren from the metropolis.

"I had 'tended ter let dat 'skip-by-night' gang 'lone, sure as flies love ter light on bald heads; but I see now dat dey're follerin' us up an' puttin' up dese rackets on us, 'cause it gets dem notorious, an' dey're miserable snide show gets lots of fellers ter tend in hopes dey'll be dere when we return der racket. But yer hear my gentle voice, der job I's goin' ter put on dem dis time'll not only sicken dem, but dere won't be such a crowd ter witness der fun," said Shorty to his friend Shanks, as they were walking home from the theatre that night.

"When will you give them a blast?"

"Lemme see, ter-day's Tuesday; ter-morrer dey'll have a swell matinee. Tell der boys I'll 'spect 'em 'round ter see der fun, for when Shorty puts up a racket he generally puts up one dat'll stick."

After a good breakfast next morning, Shorty started off down town, and stopping in at a large agricultural store on Hammond street, he asked the proprietor:

"Can yer get me a hive of bees dis morning? I don't care 'bout der price, but I must have 'em."

"Yes, sir, I can get you one."

"Den 'fi was ter send yer down a trunk could yer fix 'em in it for me an' send it ter der directions I'll leave yer, or give it ter any one I send?"

"Certainly."

"Dat's settled, den," said Shorty, pulling out a roll of bills and paying the man.

He next proceeded to a trunk store and bought a small, cheap trunk, on which he had painted the directions, and the following:

"Bee-ware.

"To be opened on the Stage."

Having sent the trunk down to where he had purchased the bees, Shorty's next move was to find somebody to carry it.

He had no trouble in procuring a stout, happy, good-natured darkey, who for a five-dollar note would have delivered it to Saint Peter, if he could have found him.

After partaking of a light and early lunch, the New York Minstrels got themselves ready to attend their rivals' performance.

"I want yer ter squat yerselves as far back ter der door as yer can, so yer can climb out inter der street if der racket should get too hot ter stan' it," said Shorty, as they left the hotel for the Melodeon, corner of Fourth and Walnut streets.

The house was a little over half full when our party arrived and took their seats at the back part of the house, and Manager Polly felt that he was in for another racket the moment he set eyes on them.

Shorty let the show run about half way through, when, beckoning to the colored man, who was standing near the door, he whispered some words to him, and a moment later the darkey was seen stalking down to the stage with the trunk on his shoulder.

"De gemmen dat gibs me dis tells me to say dat it is a little gift fur de minstrels, an' he wants yer ter open it on de stage, sah."

"Take your trunk away."

"Open it on the stage!" roared fifty voices in the audience, who had been present when the box had been sent to the New Yorkers:

"Gentlemen, you must excuse me, but I am convinced this is a practical joke of a very dirty nature, very likely, and I must beg you to allow me to remove it," said Polly, advancing to the footlights and bowing.

"Open that ther trunk jest where it lays, or my gang'll clean out dis yere house!" threatened a rough.

"Yes, you've got ter open it just where it is 'thout no shenanigan. Dat other minstrel troupe opened dere's, an' you've got ter open yours or we'll bust up der show!" yelled another.

"Oh, certainly, gentlemen," answered Polly, fearing he was going to be cleaned out. "I want all this troupe to be here and witness that the contents of the trunk are the same as I represent them."

The minstrels gathered around the trunk, and stood prepared to verify every article it contained, and during the most intense excitement Manager Polly unlocked the trunk, the key having been life in it, and raised the lid; as he did so there was an angry hum as a thousand aggravated, vexed and savage bees were let loose.

The scene that followed is one that it is in vain for pen to paint. Dozens of the angry insects lit upon the different members of the company, who howled, fought, screamed, and darted off the stage, followed by their stinging enemies. And for the next ten minutes the house was a perfect pandemonium. Song

and dance men ran head first into sentimental singers. The orchestra dropped their instruments and took refuge in flight. Polly tried to brass it out and get order out of chaos, but after fifty bees had interviewed him, he kicked the trunk into the orchestra and fled, leaving a stream of blue profanity floating behind him.

"Dere, boys, I guess we'll pull out and hunt up a place where we can get a coolin' drink, fer I'm dry laughin' at der way dem snoozers 'll look ter-night wid der heads all swelled up from der bites," laughed Shorty, and they adjourned into the sunlight.

"Guess dat's all der racket-dey'll want ter carry round in der clothes for some time," he continued.

The rest of their stay in Cincinnati was a pleasant one; they had good houses, lots of fun in the city and "across the Rhine," and left when their engagements were up with considerable reluctance.

The Dayton and Michigan Railroad provided a special car for their accommodation, and the boys had a high old time of it on their way to Detroit, which was the next city mapped out and billed for them. Songs, stump speeches, jokes, gags, cards, dominoes, and lots of other fun helped to make the time pass pleasantly, and they reached Detroit even before they were aware of it.

CHAPTER IX.

We left our friends, the New York Minstrels, at the depot in Detroit after their run from Cincinnati.

"Hack? Come this way, sir!" shouted a long, lank driver, seizing Shorty by the lapel as he was descending from the train.

"Hadn't yer better keep yer paws ter yerself?" inquired Shorty, fetching the hack driver a rap over his knuckles with his gold-headed cane, that caused him to let go and go dancing around the depot with his skinned knuckles in his mouth, only removing them long enough to explain to the passengers and his brother hackmen a plan he had for exterminating every little runt in the country.

"Hack! hack, sir! Hack! hack, captain! Hack! hack, boss! Hack, mister! Hack! hack! hack!" rang out on every side of our little party as they walked quietly through and admired that magnificent Michigan Central depot building.

"It appears a fellow's got to ride whether he wants to or not in this city," remarked Shanks, glancing ahead of him at a forest of whips, bad hats, cunning, dirty faces, and the everlasting din of "Hack! hack!"

"Some of dem ort ter hack some of dat dirt off dere faces. 'f dey ain't scared of catchin' cold," answered Shorty. "Dat advance agent of oun must hav' forgot ter order carriages for us, so s'pose we'll hav' ter pick out der men with der fewest inches of dirt on dere mugs an' ride."

"Mak' way dere, small fry, foah Ise wuss dan a short-tailed bull in de fly time. Clar de way, foah Ise de boss niggah 'roun' dis yere town, an' 'f butt ye onct ye'd think ye'd been struck by the cow-catcher of de bulgine," shouted a big seven-foot darkey, with lots of eyes, mouth, good-nature and strength, elbowing his way through the crowd till he came to our little hero and his friends, when, hauling off his battered felt hat, he asked:

"Am dis Misser Shorty an' party?"

"Dis is der crowd," answered Shorty.

"De kerriges, Misser Shorty, is rite out yere," answered the darkey, pointing to a spot on the other side of the shouting, howling crowds, who had closed up the gap and stood opening their mouths like automaton with the cry of "Hack, sir?"

"I'm glad ter learn dere's wagons some place, but I'm 'fraid 'twould take a buffalo-bull ter get us through that gang so's we could get inter dem," said Shorty, looking up at his seven-foot friend and wondering how he was ever going to pilot them through.

"Pshaw, boss! Ise gwine ter make a passage for ye; jest follow me to der kerriges, if yer please" he answered, with a broad grin on his face. Tucking his battered hat into a strap he wore about his waist, he ducked his head, and with a "Clar de way, fur de boss niggah in Detroit is somewhat roun'," he ran straight for the centre of the crowd. The first man whom he butted flew up and tried to kick the sky. Straight ahead, as if he were a freshly-discharged cannon-ball, went the giant darkey, while the crowd separated and fled as if a mad bull had broken loose.

"Howly Virgin! I'm kilt—I'm kilt! The devil a dhrop ov wind has the thick-headed naggar left in me!" exclaimed an Irishman, jumping out of the gutter, where he had been butted, and looking at his broken whip.

"Donder vetter!—ter tyvel! What for dot plack loaver hits me mit his head in mein stomach? Dot ish an awful ding," said a German hackman, crawling out from under his horse's feet with an agility surprising in a man of his size.

"Great thunder! Do you want to murder me by breaking my spine?" called out a fat, puffing hackman, who had received the darkey's head in the small of his back, and was hanging on to an ash barrel, and feeling of his backbone.

By the time the giant darkey had got through the crowd that sidewalk looked as if forty locomotives had broken loose and been plowing up things generally. On every side and in every attitude were piled cursing, howling, bruised and butted hackmen.

"Ye see, cap'n, dis nig's gwine ter be de boss nig in 'de puddle, or he's gwine ter let his har grow an' go down Souf fur a miss'hunary man. In de meantime Ise roun' when de whistle blows. Heah is de kerriges, gemmen. My name is Sam sah. If ever ye should want a nig ter butt, jess lemme know, an' I'll shake a stone wall."

It transpired that Shorty wanted to see him just then, and the chink of coin in Sam's palm caused him to smile from ear to ear; then Shanks wanted to see him, and then one after the other, till the whole troupe dropped all their loose silver into his paws. Then the carriages drove away to the Russell House, where rooms had been engaged for them.

"Dose gemmen mebbe nashunary banks in disguise or dey's mebbe bonanza fellers dat owns silber mines; but dar is one p'int on which Ise particular clar, an' dat is dey've got de pleasantest way of droppin' de cash inter a nig's hand 'thout feelin' all ober demselfes ter see if dey ain't got suffin' smaller ter give. Nuder fac' I may as well 'splain, is dat Sam Johnson is gwine ter stick pow'ful clus ter dem while dey're yere," soliloquized Sam, as he tied his silver up in a red and yellow handkerchief, stuck it in his bosom, and, after giving a scornful look at the irate hackmen, who were shaking their fists at him, he followed the carriages back to the Russell House, where he was employed.

After arriving at the hotel and registering; Shorty and Shanks paid a visit to their large and handsomely-furnished rooms on the first floor, and were washing and brushing the stain marks of travel from their garments, when they heard a hand-organ on the sidewalk below suddenly strike up, "O. Willie, We Have Missed You," and the next moment some one in the next room was heard stamping around, swearing horribly, then the bell was rung violently, and a waiter dispatched to put the kibosh on "Willie, We Have Missed You."

"I'm goin' ter hev a squint at dat ole mustard pot in der nex' room. He seems worse dan a house afire ter hear 'im cussin' an' snortin'," said Shorty, after they had finished their toilets.

"How are you going to get a squint?"

"Why, easy 'nuff. Yer jess wait 'ere for a few minutes and I'll tell yer all 'bout 'im," said Shorty, going out into the hall and walking up to the stranger's door, opened it and entered.

"Here! hello! Who the devil 're you?" asked a short, dumpy, baldheaded, red-faced, harsh-voiced little man, whose usual ugly temper was aggravated by an attack of the gout.

"Beg your pardon, old beefsteak. No need of yer bustin' yer biler," said Shorty, who took in his whole appearance, character and surroundings at a glance.

"What do you mean, you villainous dwarf, by breaking into people's rooms in this manner?"

"You ort ter get a stomjack pump 'tached ter yer innards an' try if dey couldn't pump some of dat mean cussedness out of yer," replied Shorty, backing himself toward the door.

"Oh, you housebreaking baboon you, I'd like to have you in my clutches once!" shouted the stranger, shaking his crutch at Shorty.

"Yer goin' ter hav' a bully ol' stroke of appleplexy, I'll bet. Crickety, what an ugly, purple-headed ol' stiffey yer'll make! Ta-ta!" said Shorty, kissing his hand gayly in the direction of the raging but impotent old Tartar.

Descending to the office, Shorty overhauled the register and found that the gentleman he had called upon rejoiced in the name of Snappem; then, passing into the dining-hall, they put themselves outside of as snifty a dinner as could be dished up to them.

"Well, pard, what's the first move on the board?" asked Shanks, when they had finished their meal and were selecting cigars at the stand.

"I guess we may as well slide down der street as far as der Opera House an' scoop der buildin' an' der 'rangements all in."

"Let's skate, then," said Shanks.

On the block below the hotel they ran across an organ-grinder, whom Shorty immediately hired to proceed to the hotel and play for the next hour under the corner window. At the Soldiers' Monument he picked up two more and engaged them for the rest of the afternoon, giving them all the necessary directions.

Shorty and Shanks were very much pleased with the appearance of the Opera House, which is really one of the finest buildings in the country of that kind. Shorty found that everything had been looked after, and that a large portion of the best seats in the house had already been secured.

"Dat's all hypercoon; now let's get a hack an' drive 'round der city. I want ter see 'fi can't scare up some music ter amuse Mr. Snappem."

"I commence to take a first-class tumble to myself," laughed Shanks. Hailing a hack that was passing, they entered, and were driven through the Campus Martius, Woodward, Michigan and Monroe avenues, and managed to secure half a dozen more. These they arranged so as to have them succeed each other during the evening hours, and last and greatest they came across a Teutonic band of four pieces, who were hired for midnight.

"Dere," said Shorty, after he had paid the last one a quarter in advance as a retaining fee, "if ole Snappem don't have 'nuff music ter-night ter keep 'im on der war-path, yer can chalk me down for a green gooseberry."

After enjoying a pleasant drive around the city they drove back to the hotel, where the first sight that struck their eyes was the gouty old gentleman at an open window, shaking his crutch, cursing in every language known, two weatherbeaten organ-grinders, who kept smiling, bowing and grinding out "Eileen Alanna" and "Mulligan Guards" loud enough to be heard six blocks away.

Alighting from their carriage, Shorty and Shanks dropped a quarter into each organist's hand as they passed, much to the disgust of the old gentleman at the window, who shouted:

"Fire and brimstone! What in thunder are you giving them money for?"

"Slide in an' soak yer head, ol' fireworks, or der fust ting yer know you'll 'plode an' spile all der furniture wid yer remains," retorted Shorty, kissing his hand at him.

"Don't dare to speak to me, you impudent Tom Thumb!" screamed the old man, slamming down his window only to slam it up again and remark: "If you was half my size, you undergrown feller, I'd cane you, in spite of my sickness."

"Got a cane of my own, thank yer, an' it ain't der kerrect thing ter carry more'n one at a time, so I'll 'scuse yer, ol' camphene jug," said Shorty; and quite a number of persons who had been attracted by the music and the strange behavior of old Snappem at his open window, burst into a hearty laugh.

Every half hour during that afternoon and evening was marked by the arrival of a fresh organ, the first notes of which would start old Gouty Snappem out of his chair as if he had been sitting on a pin, and after a period of howling, swearing, slamming his window open, threatening and bullying, he would dispatch a waiter to drive him away; but no sooner had he choked off "Tommy, Come and Sit Beside Your Aunty," and returned to his duties than a sentimental grinder would take his place and render "Silver Threads Among the Gold" in a key that unlocked every particle of bile in old Snappem's system and once more he would storm up and down the room, peppering the unfortunate musician with ink-stands, paper-weight, boot-jack and the soap-dish, much to the amusement of Shorty and his friends and a crowd of youngsters who had assembled and set Snappem down as a raving lunatic, whose keeper had him locked up, and on his appearance he would be addressed with such little pleasantries as:

"Hello, luny! Wher' d' you 'scape from?"

"How d'yer like de 'sylum?'

"You'd better look out, for if your keeper catches you at a winder, he'll clap you in a strait-jacket."

"Is all crazy fellers' faces as red an' cross-lookin' as his'n?" inquired a handkerchiefless boy with one suspender in a shrill voice that made Snappem slam down the window and throw himself in an easy-chair in about as quiet and peaceful a condition as a fresh-lit pack of fire-crackers.

The waiter was again summoned and ordered to dislodge "Silver Threads Among the Gold," and it was only after being struck across the shins with "Silver Threads'" organ stick, getting a black eye, two inches of skin peeled off his nose and several handfuls of red threads pulled out of his head that he persuaded him to retire. On the waiter's return to the hotel it was deemed advisable to put him in an arnica bath, gum him all over with sticking plaster and send him to an hospital.

There was a pause then for some ten minutes and the crowd in Shorty's room had ventured to remove their handkerchiefs from their mouths when suddenly on the soft twilight rang out clear as a bell:

"Oh, my name it is Josephus Orange Blossom,
I'se de happiest little niggah in 'der lan'."

Why, the fact of his name being Josephus Orange Blossom should specially irritate and rile old Snappem I don't know, but he jumped higher, screamed louder, cursed wickered, raved longer, pounded the floor with his crutch harder, slammed the window up quicker and shrieked like ten steam whistles.

"He's gettin' wuss," shouted one of the boys.

"I'll bet dey've got him chained by de foot ter de bedpost."

"I wonder how dey get in ter feed 'im?"

"Saw a hole in der ceilin' an' drop de grub down ter 'im, an' der keeper tol' a feller that tol' my dad dat sometimes he eats der feather pillers an' half der keeper's clothes up 'fore dey can stop 'im," answered a truthful, freckle-faced boy.

"What is it, boys?" asked a citizen, stopping and looking up.

"A 'scaped loonytic, sir. He's killed two men an' an ol' lady fore dey cotched him. Dey're keepin' 'im chained up dere till dey get a strait-jacket made for 'im," explained Truthful James, number two.

"Dear—dear me," said the man, staring at Snappem. "Well, he is an awful vicious, bloodthirsty-looking creature," and he passed on to tell every one he met about the lunatic murderer they had confined at the Russell House.

"You're an awful old liar!" yelled Snappem.

"They ort ter bleed 'em. See how red his face is," suggested a woman with a basket and two moist-nosed children.

"Bleed the d—l!" roared Snappem.

"An' put chunks of ice on his ugly bald head," said a man who kept a store around the corner.

"I'd chunk you, you idiot, if I had hold of you," roared Snappem.

"Gracious, ain't he savage."

"Mebbe dey'll have ter get der perlice an' sojers ter shoot 'im," said an imaginative youth with a pocket full of peanuts which he was chucking into himself.

Then Snappem slammed down the window, but the sweet, inspiring strains of "Josephus Orange Blossom" still floated in upon him, aggravating him to such a pitch that he mashed the foot-board of his bed into toothpicks for the poor of Detroit with his crutch and rang violently for a waiter.

"Number ten again! That man wants more waiting on than all the rest of the guests in the hotel," said the clerk as he dispatched a waiter, who was at once ordered to drive "Josephus Orange Blossom" to the uttermost end of the earth.

Mindful of how the other waiter had been skinned, wooed and mauled, waiter number two resolved on diplomacy, and, approaching Josephus, he managed, by the aid of a torn ten-cent stamp, a pair of brass sleeve-buttons, a pawn ticket and a promise of all the cold chicken he could eat, to induce Josephus to meander.

"Oh, carry me out and bury me decently!" laughed Shanks, as the last strains of the hand-organ died away.

"Let me laugh myself to death in my boots," said Dave Reed, uncovering his head.

"Shook harder than if I'd had half a dozen agues all at once," said Sambo.

"Der racket worked like a house afire. Yer boys want ter member, though, an' not give it away ter anybody," said Shorty, coming over from the window, where he had been watching the fun from behind the curtain.

After making their toilets, which consisted of a brush, wash and drink, the New Yorkers started down the stairs to supper just as a new organ-grinder proceeded to render "The Blue Danube" in such an agonizing manner that the wall-paper commenced to curl up on the wall and the gouty old gentleman was heard climbing out from under the bed, where he had concealed himself, and shouting madly for a shotgun.

After supper the boys fired up fresh cheroots, went into the smoking-room and watched a waiter wrestling with "The Blue Danube." It was a short and sanguinary affair. The waiter caught "The Blue Danube" by the coat-collar and was pulling him away when the latter let fly a tidal wave with his left fist that caught the unsuspecting waiter on the eye and seated him on the sidewalk without losing a note. Then the white-aproned waiter rushed in on him and tried to catch him by the throat; but "The Blue Danube" welted him over the head with his organ stick, and the waiter, after kicking a hole in the organ, retired to the hotel for repairs, while "The Blue Danube," after examining the damage done his organ, started up the street, making the spring air howl with Italian profanity.

A ripping house for a first night greeted the New York Minstrels. Everybody came to see a good show, enjoy a hearty laugh, and that they were not disappointed was proved by the encores, cheers and loud applause that followed each performer's part. Dave Reed got off a new song and dance that took immense; but the hit of the evening was made by Shorty in a stump speech in which he had cunningly managed to introduce a lot of city gags and cuts at fellows around the city that everybody knew, winding up with a laughable description of the hack drivers' gang they had met on their arrival. As many of the hackmen were present and were identified at once by the boys in the gallery, you can imagine the fun and excitement that followed and shouts from the gods of:

"Sthand up, Red Mike, that drives the broken-eared plug!"

"Show der ladies an' folks yer pretty mug, Sandy McFadden, dat's got der broken-winded team."

"Are yer goin' home ter put some poultices on der swell-legs of dat team of yours?" shouted a bare-footed gutter-snipe as a man was observed making his way quietly to the door.

Shout after shout of laughter went up from the audience as

each well-known figure tried to shrink out of sight, and the curtain dropped finally amidst thunders of applause.

Leaving the theatre, after they had changed their clothes and removed the cork, the company strolled back to the hotel in a body.

"Great crickey, look a dere!" exclaimed Shorty as they turned the corner, pointing with his finger to where the four brass horn players that he had engaged in the afternoon had taken up their position under Snappem's window and were loosening the very bricks in the chimney with the ear-splitting blasts of "Dot Leedle German Pand," while above, Snappem, in his night-shirt and bare legs, with a face like a boiled beet, was hurling four-story curses and china wash-basins at them.

After leaning up against the railing on the other side of the street, the New Yorkers laughed till they were sore to see Snappem dart in, slam the window, only to reappear two minutes later, redder in the face than ever, with some fresh profanity, an empty bottle and a door-knob to hurl.

"S'pose we giv' der ol' bloke a rest, tho' dat ol' red-pepper bottle of a Snappem don't deserve any, for I'll bet all of my ulster overcoat dat der moths has left against a ten-cent diamond pin dat he'd hammer his modder ober der snoot wid 'is crutch 'f he caught her lookin' at 'im sideways," said Shorty, and they dismissed "Dot leedle German Pand" and betook themselves to the hotel.

As Shorty and Shanks went up to their room to bed that night they found Snappem's door open, and that irritable personage sitting in a rocking chair, amidst the wreck of the furniture, fanning himself with a newspaper and muttering wholesale threats at the musical world in general.

"Hello, pard, reg'lar ol' get-up-an' crawl-from-under town for music dis, ain't it?" inquired Shorty, stepping into the doorway and winking.

"Get out of there, you imp; 'tis none of your infernal business what I think," howled Snappem, looking around for something to throw.

"How d'yer lik' der selechuns? I tell yer what, old sore toes, Josephus Orange Blossom would fetch water outer a dry pump. Shouldn't wonder if dere was a brass band comin' long pretty soon ter serenade yer," said Shorty.

"Go to thunder! go to blazes! I'll murder somebody 'fore I leave this cussed house!" roared Snappem, wildly pawing the air.

"I'm just as near der blazes as I want ter be when I'se clus ter yer ol' bombshells."

"Go to the dickens! go to Guinea! I'd give half a million dollars, if I had it, for a double-barreled shotgun and all the ammunitiion I could shoot."

"Shoot nothin'. Why yer couldn't shoot a bed bug. Put a wet towel 'round that fiery ol' mug of yer's and crawl into bed, and I'll buy yer a pint of fresh-roasted peanuts first t'ing in der mornin'," said Shorty, going out and into his own room, and leaving Snappem raving and groaning over the prospective serenade.

Somewhere or other the organ racket leaked out the next day. An irrepressible reporter of the "Detroit Free Press" got hold of it, and the paper came out with half a column about it that set everybody in the city in a laugh and crowded the Opera House every evening till "Standing Room Only" was hung out every night during their stay before the curtain rose.

The troupe did their best to excel, and their efforts were appreciated.

Shorty at once won his way into the affections of the boys of Detroit by his constantly planning some racket that would set everybody laughing for the next twenty-four hours.

But the week finally drew around, and the New York Minstrels, with a fresh link in their chain of friendship, packed up their worldly goods, and took the Wabash and Western Railroad back toward St. Louis, which was their next show town.

The trip was a long and uneventful one. The railroad passed through some of the finest farming land in the world.

The troupe had engaged a special car for themselves, and, between euchre, seven-up and other games, managed to pass the time pleasantly.

They arrived in St. Louis late on Saturday evening and were driven at once to the Planter's Hotel. Rooms had been secured for the company at the Southern, but the total destruction of that building by fire made them change their headquarters.

CHAPTER X.

Our readers will recollect that we left our little hero and his troupe, on their arrival, at the Planter's Hotel, St. Louis.

"It's customary to register your name on your arrival," said a supercilious clerk, with his hair parted in the middle and a diamond as big as a teacup on his shirt front.

"Shoot der quill over 'ere den," said Shorty.

The clerk glanced down at him coldly and disdainfully as he tossed down a pen and pushed the register toward him.

Our hero eyed him quizzically as he dashed off in his bold, quaint writing the single word "Shorty."

"See here—see here, this thing won't do, you know. I want your real name, not your nickname," said the flashy clerk, picking his teeth with the end of a pen-handle.

"Guess dat one'll have to do yer, Mister Dandy Jim," replied Shorty, coolly.

"Oh, no, that won't answer at all. Here's what I want," exclaimed the clerk, pointing to a clearly written address of "Edwin T. Smith, Pottsville, Penn."

"Dat's what yer want, is it? Why didn't yer squeal in der fust place?" said Shorty, taking the pen and dashing off Edwin T. Smith, Pottsville, Penn. "Dere, how'll dat suit yer imperial nibs?" he continued, throwing down the pen and pushing the book over to the clerk.

"But, sacrificed heavens! your name is not Edwin T. Smith, is it?" demanded the clerk, becoming very indignant and excited as he saw a broad grin passing over the faces of all the parties standing around.

"Course not."

"And you don't live at Pottsville, Pennsylvania?"

"Never was in der place in my life."

"Then, why, sir, and what do you mean, sir, by signing another man's name?" exclaimed the clerk, working himself up to a fever heat.

"If yer keep on workin' yerself any hotter, I'll have ter giv' der fire 'larm and fatch a couple of engines down to play on yer an' keep yer from settin' yer shirt afire," answered Shorty, cool as a cucumber and with a comical look in his eyes.

"What made you sign that name and ruin the looks of my register, I say?"

"'Cause yer tol' me ter."

"I told you to, sir?"

"Yes, yer said 'ere's what I want, and yer p'intaed ter Smith's name, an' now dat you've got it yer act as if yer'd eat somefin' dat didn't 'gree wid yer, or mebbe it's dat diamond pavin' stun dat's makin' yer round shouldered carryin' it," said Shorty, so quaintly that the rest of the troupe burst out laughing, in which they were joined by all the outsiders, who had heard the conversation.

"Never you mind that diamond pin. All I want you to understand is that you can't come around here playing any of your smart tricks, for I won't have it."

"Don't see how yer goin' ter 'scape 'em 'thout yer climb up der chimney."

"Now, allowing that you do bear that ridiculous name of Shorty, it is necessary for to enter where you come from."

"Will yer sot it down?"

"Yes. Where was it?"

"Yer all ready, are yer?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Den yer can sot down dat I came from der depot."

"Great State of Missouri! Are you trying to make a fool out of me, you undergrown bantam?"

"Bantum is good. No, dere's no 'cessity in me tryin' ter make yer what natur' has done afore me," retorted Shorty, coddling.

"Where your home is, is what I'm trying to drive through your thick skull," said the clerk, red up to the back of the ears and mad enough, as he slung books and things around, to light matches on.

"My home is wherebber I hang up my hat," said Shorty.

"But you must have come from some place in particular," persisted the clerk.

"Some place in whar?"

"In particular."

"Don't think I eber showed in dat place."

"If you wasn't the stupidest runt in the world, you'd know I meant where you belonged to."

"Oh, where I belong ter! Why couldn't yer get dat through yerself in der fust place?"

"Well, where do you belong?"

"I guess dat yer can sot dis clothes-pin down as belongin' ter der New York Minstrels, der boss gang dat eber showed up 'round 'ere."

The clerk threw down his pen and stalked moodily up and down behind the counter, while the lookers-on laughed and applauded.

After a good supper, such as they knew how to dish up at the Planter's Hotel, Shorty and Shanks strolled out for a ramble, scooping in De Bar's Opera House, the Apollo Gardens and the Varieties Theatre, the latter being a flash show for gentlemen only.

Just as they were leaving the Varieties they ran across a big, innocent six-foot countryman, who had come down to town with a load of produce, and having disposed of it, was seeing all the sights he could. Shorty's diminutive stature immedi-

ately caught his eyes, and approaching our hero he said in a rough, good-natured voice:

"I say, littul stranger, w'uld it make you hog-killin' mad if a feller that hails from Bissell's Point was to ax you if you'd allus been as small as y'are?"

"Small's I am, why Mister Telegraf-pole, I used ter be 'bout yer size," said Shorty, casting a comical look up at his new acquaintance.

"Wal, I vum. How d'you come to be so short now?" said country, looking at him open-mouthed.

"Well, yer see, I fell out of a balloon when I was 'bout ten thousan' feet up an' struck on my head in a sand heap, an' when a lot of folks who seen me tumblin' run an' got dere shovels an' dug down forty-seven feet ter where I was dey foun' dat I'd been druv down ter dis size," explained Shorty to the countryman, who, with eyes and ears bulging out, drank in every word.

"By cucumbers and tomatos! that's orful. Did it hurt you much?"

"No, dat's one of the sing'larest things 'bout it. Dere wasn't no pain of any 'count, but nobody know'd me. When I went to my store my pardner bounced me for an impostor. My wife got mad an' slammed der door in my face, said she'd married a slashin' big feller an' she'd break der nex' runt's head dat com' round dem doors. Den my aunt, whose heir I was, sent for me, but as soon as she spotted me she yelled and threw pillars at me, and wound up by makin' some oder ol' bloke her heir. Der only men dat knew me 'tall was dose I owed money ter, an' I think dey knew me 'fore I struck der sand bank comin' down," exclaimed Shorty, who was in a talkative humor.

They were passing through Pine street when they came across a man with an electric galvanic battery, standing on one of the corners, and Shorty hopped at the chances of a racket quicker than a hungry hen goes for the first grasshopper of the season.

"Oh, here's fun. Come, stranger, I'll bet yer der drinks dat I can hol' dem handles as long as yer can," said Shorty.

"Hold those thar sticks. Why, little feller, I could hold them for six months."

Shorty slipped half a dollar into the operator's hand, unseen, and gave him the wink. Then turning to his agricultural friend, he said as he picked up the handles:

"Time me now."

The farmer produced an enormous silver bull's-eye watch from his fob and followed the minutes with his thumb nail, while the operator allowed only sufficient current to tingle him to escape.

"Ten minutes," said the farmer after a pause.

"An' dat's ebery plagued minit I can hol' dem, an' I don't believe dere's many fellers roun' dese corners can hol' dem longer," said Shorty, dropping them as if they were made of lead.

"Then there's a pow'ful weak set of critters 'round here is all I've got to say," said Greeny, taking hold of the handles.

"Hev yer got a good squar' grip on 'em?" asked Shorty.

"A team of oxen couldn't budge 'em—here!—hello!—darnation! Great everlasting squashes! but there's needles runnin' down inter my toes!" yelled the farmer as the operator opened the full force of the current upon him.

"Why don't you drop them?" asked a stranger, coming up and laughing.

"How in seven different kinds of thunder can I?" yelled the frightened farmer, who was writhing around, dancing, shouting, kicking, turning somersaults and waking up everybody within seven blocks.

The operator checked the current a minute later, and the countryman arose, jammed on his felt hat, looked at his hands for a minute, then took a long, slow look around the crowd that his yells had brought together, and asked:

"Did any of you men happen to see a stumpy runt of a feller that dropped from a balloon ten thousand feet inter a sand bank?"

"Well, mebbe it's just as well, for I'd have dropped him ten thousand feet more inter another sand bank if I could get my flippers on him," he continued on, no one present appearing to know the party in question.

"An' you're the man that set me a-howlin', are you?" he exclaimed, reaching over the battery and catching the terrified operator by the shirt band. He dragged him across, shook him like a rat, kicked the battery into the gutter and started up the street, exclaiming:

"I'm wuss nor a buffalo bull an' a den of rattlesnakes when I get woke up, an' fi ever catch that runt ther'll be a funeral in the runt family."

Meanwhile our friends, Shorty and Shanks, were quietly meandering back to the hotel, having skipped out as soon as they saw the racket started and the countryman prancing around.

Our friends turned in very soon after their return to the hotel, feeling tired after their long journey in the cars, and

slept soundly till after the first bell had sounded for breakfast next morning.

"Well, Shorty, old chum, what's the programme for Sunday?" asked Shanks as he set down his empty coffee cup after a sumptuous breakfast and wiped his mustache.

"Dunno yet. I ain't fixed up anythín' yet, but I s'pose we'd better get a high rollin' buggy wid a spankin' team and scoop in some of dese parks an' drives 'round 'ere for luck," answered Shorty, stirring the sugar in his cup.

"Yes, that would be hunky."

"Dere's one thing dat I've been workin' on ever since I struck dis hotel, an' dat is, dat I'se goin' ter put up a racket on dat pill garlic clerk, er yer can set Shorty down as a cotton-headed muff," said our hero, earnestly.

"But how in the world are' you going to get a chance at him?" asked Shanks, thoughtfully.

"Yer leave all dat ter me, pard. Keep fly, an' when I want yer I'll give yer der offis. One thing I can't stumick, an' dat is der frills dat dat ink-slingin' snoozer, wid his dollar diamond an' his hair split in der middle, puts on. Why, yer'd think he owned der city an' was a bigger man dan der President, but yer can bet yer moss agates dat he'll wish he was little 'nough ter crawl through a mouse-trap 'fore I get through wid 'im," continued Shorty, getting up from the table and strolling into the smoking-room.

"Yes, that clerk's one of them kind of fellows that it would be a bully speculation to buy them for what they're worth and sell them for what they think they're worth," said Shanks.

"I'll bet dat der feller dat'd give more'n two cents for 'im would be so badly stuck dat he'd shoot his bargain fust an' hisself afterwards," laughed Shorty.

"If they'd dig a hole some place and drive him into it, he'd make a good post to hitch horses to," suggested Shanks.

"Let's go an' see 'bout gettin' a team for our drive," said Shorty, and lighting their cigars they went around to a first-class livery stable, where, having made known their wants, they were soon placed in possession of a nobby, two-seated buggy and as spanking and showy a team as you could scare up in St. Louis.

"Now dis is what I call takin' solid comfort an' fun all in der one dose," said Shorty, leaning back and handling the ribbons.

"Yes, it is pretty high-tonish," said Shanks.

Just as they were passing Lafayette Park they came across their agricultural friend of the night before, driving four immense, sleepy-looking mules, attached to a Noah's ark of a wagon.

"Hey, you runt, you, hold on. I want to see you," he yelled, getting out his black-snake whip as soon as he saw Shorty.

"Good morin', flag-pole! How long d'yer hol' dem handles las' night?"

"I'll show you how long!" shouted the enraged farmer, lashing up his mules and trying to overtake Shorty's light-footed, fast-stepping team.

"Don't hurry yerself, cabbage stalks. 'Fraid I can't wait ter-day. Bye-bye," said Shorty, putting his thumb to his nose and wriggling his fingers as his team sprang forward and left the countryman raving, shouting and thrashing his sleepy-looking mules for satisfaction.

After a delightful ride, during which Shorty had several opportunities to try the speed and mettle of his team against others, and in most of all of which he was fortunate enough to come out with flying colors, they returned to the hotel and sent the team around to the stable by one of the help.

As soon as he had finished his dinner Shorty made inquiries in relation to the trunks containing their stage rigs, and learning that several of them were there, he selected two, had them sent to his room, then giving Shanks and Dave Reed the wink, the three passed quietly up to Shorty's room and locked the door.

"Now, fellers, I want yer ter help me ter build a high rollin' rig of gal's clothes out of dem. Com', Dave, yer used ter do der gal bisness up ter der handle," said Shorty, unlocking the trunks and displaying everything from a king's diamond-studded crown to a pair of trunks.

"In the first place, Shorty, who's going to be the wench?" asked Dave.

"Dis ain't goin' ter be any of yer wenches. I want ter represent one of der 'ristocratic, snifty, gushin' belles of 'bout seventeen, wid a nice figger and lots of soap-colored hair, what dey call blondes," explained Shorty.

"Yes, but who are you going to get to take the part?" asked Reed.

"Myself."

"You?" asked Shanks.

"You?" echoed Dave.

"I'se der blonde."

"And you want us to help rig you up so you'll pass muster?" said Dave, entering into the spirit of the joke.

"All right, Shorty, old boy; I'll tog you out the best I know how. But I don't know any more about women's fixin's than

I do about what makes the black marks on the moon," said Shanks, so helplessly that Shorty and Dave Reed burst out in a roar of laughter.

"Hold on just where you are a minute till I come back. I've got a half-way idea wher some harness is to be had," said Dave, slipping out of the room and returning half an hour later with an armful of feminine toggery of the nattiest kind.

"There, now, we'll make as gushing a belle of you as ever flirted a handkerchief," remarked Dave as he dumped his armful down and commenced selecting some undergarments for Shorty to try on.

Half an hour later Shorty was transformed into a bewitching little belle, with a wealth of golden hair flowing down her back, a superbly-rounded bust and a two-story bustle.

"There," said Dave, turning him around admiringly and fixing a loop here and a ribbon there, "you're fixed, and I'll defy St. Louis to turn out a nobbier and tastier dressed gal."

"Now I want yer ter cork my face till it's blacker dan a crow's foot," said Shorty, trying to pull a pair of delicate lavender kids over his fat fingers.

"That won't take long," said Dave as he gave a final glance at the outfit, and then set himself to corking Shorty's face, which, in a few minutes, he had two shades blacker than ebony.

"Dere, I'se the naughtiest, nobb'est, nicest little gal dat's out," said Shorty as Dave Reed wound a long blue veil around his shoulders, aiter completely draping his face with it.

"Now, Shanks, yer've got ter hurt up der rest of der boys, an 'tell dem dat dere's a high rollin' racket comin' off, a i' take dem, an' all der rest of der folks yer can scare up inter der back parlors on der side entrance a' lay mum till der fun begins," explained Shorty. Then, as Shanks departed, he told Dave that he wanted him to first see him into the parlor, then bribe a darky to hand the high-toned clerk a tiny, perfumed missive, and if questioned where he had obtained it, to answer from a young lady who was waiting in the parlor.

"Ah, a billet doux for me," murmured the clerk as one of the waiters, hurrying through a few minutes later, handed him the tiny note.

"Sam?"

"Sah."

"Where did you receive this?"

"Young lady, sah, comin' in de side entrance, sah, gib it to me."

"All right," said the clerk, and tearing open the envelope, he read:

"Dear Sir:—What will you think of my wild, mad determination to make your acquaintance, which I have long sought, but cold fate, relentless parents and a cruel, unfeeling world have kept us apart. I have risked all to meet you, and am waiting your presence in the first parlor, right of side entrance. Affectionately,

MINNIE MONFAGUE."

The dandy clerk swallowed the bait like a gudgeon would a cracker, bounced around to a cracked looking-glass and slicked his locks down, curled the corners of his skeleton mustache, and calling to some employé to look after the desk, hastened through the corridors with a supercilious smile of conquest on his idiotic face.

Entering the room where Shorty was waiting, and which had been darkened to a faint, mysterious light, the clerk beheld the young, stylishly dressed stranger, and approaching her, he struck an attitude and said:

"Fairest and sweetest of thy sex, a moment since thy fairy note summoning me to thy presence was received, and I have flown to thee on the footsteps of love."

"I too hav' counted the minits," whispered a voice under the heavy, muffled veil.

"Tell me, Minnie—for you will let me call you Minnie won't you?—have you known me long?" he inquired, coming closer toward his idol.

"Oh, ever so long; but, yer see, ma always took me wid her in de carriage an' pa used to make me study when he com' home from the bank," whispered the lady's voice.

"A carriage, father in a bank. Maybe you haven't fallen on your feet," thought the clerk, coming to her side and taking her hand in his. "And all this time, Minnie, you never forgot me, and at last have made me the happiest of men by giving me this meeting."

"Oh, I—I—I'm so 'fraid we'll be—be—dis—dis—covered," stammered the girl.

"Have no fear, darling. You are with me, and I will love and protect you while I live" said the clerk theatrically.

"But—but—I—I—I must g—go now."

"One boon, fairest empress of my heart and queen of my love, ere you leave me. Let me see your sweet, fair face, that I may carry its loving expression with me sleeping or waking till we meet again," he urged, and placing his arm around her waist, he drew her head down on his shoulders when Shorty, with a loud "yah! yah!" tore away his veil, closing to the aston-

ished and thunderstruck clerk the face of a black, grinning wench. At the same moment Shanks turned the light on on the group, and shout after shout of laughter burst out from those who had been hidden spectators of the scene.

"Oh, Lord! that beats the Romeo and Juliet scene all to pieces!" screamed one of the guests.

"He wanted one glance at her sweet, fair face, and he got it," laughed another.

"Call me Minnie," said Dave Reed.

Meanwhile the clerk had given one wild and frantic glare around till his eyes finally rested on Shorty's grinning mug. Then, with a sickly look about the gills and a weakness in his knees, he slunk out, followed by a shout of laughter that sent him up two stairs at a time to his room.

He came down the next morning and tried to brass it out, but they were too much for him. From the bell boy to the proprietor, all coddled him, and the dollar diamond, that evening, was replaced by a courteous gentleman who was not only a good fellow, but "knew how to run a hotel."

Shorty opened to a rattling old house.

The city had been well billed, and their coming extensively advertised, although stories of Shorty's rackets, which had preceded him, had done more good than all the advertising.

At all events, the St. Louis boys were determined that they would give them as warm a reception as they had experienced on their triumphant tour, and turned out nightly in such force that stretched the seating capacity of the Olympic to the utmost and filled the treasury with wealth.

Shorty's racket with the hotel clerk got wind, and the rush was greater than ever, especially as our hero had a' a ged an act entitled "The Dollar Diamond; or, the Hotel Clerk's First and Only Love."

It was a gay old week the troupe spent in that city.

Every day some fresh pleasure was planned and the St. Louis boys seemed to think no party complete without their New York friends were with them.

Shorty, you can bet, was not quiet. As soon as he saw that everything in the show line was in running order and the money coming in hand over fist, he struck out some fresh racket that would make the rest stand from under for awhile.

But seven days won't last forever no matter how you try to stretch them, and the New York Minstrels found themselves packing up one bright, sunny morning for a ride over the St. Louis and Southeastern Railroad to Louisville, Ky., where they were expected, and which city was gorgeous in sunset posters announcing their coming.

After many a handshake and parting drink our friend Shorty and his troupe were soon speeding toward the land of fast horses, blue grass and good whisky.

"Boys," said Shorty, fixing himself comfortably in his seat and looking out at the last of the city they were leaving "dat's a town where a feller could show up ter der eebning of der bust up of der world, an' den get up resurrection mornin' feel'n' dat dere was lots of places yer hadn't seed an' lots of fun yer hadn't had, an' wind up by wishin' dey'd let yer go back dere for forty more shakes of a lamb's tail."

"St. Louis may be red hot, but there's dead squads of places to beat it," said Shanks.

"Where's one?" demanded Tambo.

"Why, Louis-ville, of course."

"Somebody fan me wid a Dutch sausage," laughed Shorty, "for dat is a German joke."

"'Bout time we heard from the other gang. I wonder what route they've struck this time?" said another.

"Well, judging from der way dey were in when I las' seed dem, I should say dey was certainly before us," answered Shorty, and the party laughed.

Thus joking, singing, laughing and card playing, the boys passed their time pleasantly till the train stopped at Louisville.

CHAPTER XI.

On the arrival of the train there was the usual spasm of life that marks Southern stations. Steam whistles screamed, men with names printed on their hats ran hither and thither and swore; baggage smashers hurled iron-bound trunks down in shattered fragments; horses, frightened by the locomotive, backed themselves around in circles, to the disgust of their drivers; trucks with trunks ran up and down the platform, spilling an unsuspecting traveler who "wants to know" into an irritable old man, who immediately canes him, and a free fight seems imminent. When the whistle blows the man who wanted to know springs aboard, and ten minutes later the depot is deserted except by a blue-bottle fly on the window pane and a half-clad, ten-year-old darkey, who was amusing himself dropping peanut shells down a knot-hole in the waiting room floor.

"Dis is duller dan a graveyard after der plantin' is ober an' der processhun's gone home," said Shorty, glancing slowly around.

"Where did you intend to hang out?" asked Shanks.

"Der Louisville Hotel on Main street, only where der stage or conveyance dat's ter take us dere dat's what's crawlin' endways thro' my hair."

"What hotel did you say?" asked Tambo, who had been skrimishing around on his own hook.

"Der Louisville."

"Well, there's a team and a stage marked 'Louisville Hotel,' and a nigger driver fast asleep outside here," said Tambo.

There was a general rush for the stage and the darkey was shook, pulled, mauled, yelled at and jerked around in lively style.

"Foah de Lor' dis am a cl'ar case ob bulldozin' bushwhackin'. Yer all my's well clim' out dat stage, foah' dis nigger ain't gwine ter start a fut till de train comes in wid de minstrels on," said the old darkey, firmly, as he pulled out an old brass watch and consulted it.

"But the train's in half an hour ago, stupid, and all the passengers are gone," explained Dave Reed.

"Scuse me, gemmen bulldozers, dis watch says dat train'll be yeah in Jess half an hour, an' dis watch' am der berry debbel foah keepin' time wid de rail cars," said the old man, shaking his head.

"The train's in and gone, confound your stupid head!" yelled the troupe.

"Dis watch, gemmen bull——"

"Hang the watch. Go on with the stage!" yelled Shanks.

"Start up dat team, uncle, or I'll make yer t'ink dat der day of Jubilee hab come," said Shorty, and lowering the front window of the stage, he stuck a pin in the end of his cane, and, slipping it up unperceived, he jabbed the moke in the thigh with it.

"Ouw! Bress de Lor'! I'se bit by a cotton-headed serpent, shuah!" reared the old man, springing up, taking off his suspenders and pulling down his overalls to see where he had been stung.

He had just got quieted down, and was referring to the brass watch again, when Shorty spurred him up once more.

"Clar ter de mitey goodness, dere's dat 'fernal cotton-head back 'gin!" he yelled, springing up in such haste that he dropped the watch from the top of the stage to the ground.

One of the boys got out and tossed it up to him, but it was in a badly demoralized condition, and persisted in running around the whole twenty-four hours every two minutes.

"I'se off now, gemmen bulldozers, foah I want ter consult wid some pusson dat unferstan's de prescribin' for a watch dat acts like it was gwine to run de nex' billyn' yeahs in half an hour."

Every few yards between the depot and the hotel Shorty would slyly give the old darkey a prod, and the wild yells, eccentric actions and comical capers of the old fellow attracted the attention of everybody along the streets through which they passed.

Driving up to the front of the hotel the old man flung down the reins, climbed off the box, and, hauling off his battered straw hat, approached his boss, the proprietor, and said:

"Is de train in, boss?"

"Yes. What kept you?"

"Did der train 'peah to be anywhar' 'bout de usual time ob day?" asked the old man.

"Yes, it was on time."

"Den, boss, I'se gwine rite down town an' call a board ter 'vestigate dis watch's purceedin's in dis 'fair."

"The next time you're late back from the depot you won't escape so easily," warned the proprietor.

"One minit, boss. Yer don't t'ink dat any of dem gemmen is spiritoool mediyums, do yeah?"

Being assured on that point, the old fellow put on his torn straw hat, took his head wisely, put the brass watch to his ear and started down the street, singing a fragment of some old plantation ditty.

"An old and privileged servant. Been with me since he was a child; honest and faithful," laughed the host in explanation as he led the way into the hotel and called waiters to show them to their apartments.

Shorty and Shanks were more than pleased with their large commodious apartments, opening upon the main street, and having brushed the dust and stains of travel from their persons, hauled up their chairs to the bay windows, which opened to the floor, and enjoyed a quiet, sociable smoke and chat.

"Any idea of the show house?" asked Shanks.

"Not der faintest. It's der biggest lay-out in der city, an' I guess it's all hunky dory," said Shorty, calmly.

There was a good, comfortably-filled house gathered to welcome the New York Minstrels that evening. The loud and enthusiastic recommendations and press notices from their St. Louis friends had awakened a desire among the Louisville boys to see them, and a nicely filled house was the result.

"Well, that'll do for an opening night," said Shanks as they walked home from the theatre after the performance.

"Dere ort ter hav' been two hundred dollar's more in der

house. Dey wants som' citemant ter start dem up here, an' we've just got ter keep our eyes peeled for somethin' dat's goin' ter get dem all up an' buzzin' 'round like a hive of bees," answered Shorty.

"An' who's going to stir them?"

"We are, Jess as soon as der chance turns up, you bet."

"But, from what I hear, this ain't a good show town, anyhow," said Shanks.

"Oh, dat be hanged for a yarn. Dere ortn't ter be an' mustn't be anythin' but good show towns for der New York Minstrels. Dat may do for some of dese snide, hamfattin' gangs ter giv' away, but wid a crowd like we run, der town billed till it looks lik' a patchwork quilt, dere ort to, an's got ter be a jam ebery night," answered Shorty, and a little while after their return to the hotel they retired.

Our hero and Shanks were up bright and early next morning, knocking around the nicely shaded and well paved streets before the sun got too warm, returning to the hotel in time for a red-hot breakfast, which they sat down to with appetites that enabled them to do it justice.

They were enjoying a smoke on the veranda and planning a trip to the falls, when a tall, sun-burned, good-looking young fellow joined them, and, after a moment, introduced himself as Thomas Jennings, captain of Our Boys' Baseball Nine, of Louisville.

"And seeing you looked like a fun-loving, free-and-easy party, I made bold to run over and invite you to attend a match—Kentucky against New York. The fact, indeed, of your being from New York is sufficient guarantee of your being ball-tossers," said the young fellow in a frank, hearty voice that prepossessed them in his favor at once, besides here was the very opportunity Shorty had been praying for.

"I'm squar' up an' down glad ter meet yer in der fust place, an' I 'sure yer dat der Our Boys' Club of Louisville has made itself a name dat's heard pretty often in der Norf. Der New York Minstrels cheerfully 'cept your challenge, an' we'll play our level best ter keep ole New York's end up in der struggle," answered Shorty.

"Bully for you. I s'pose you're going to captain your nine?" asked their visitor.

"Yes, I guess dat I'll boss der gang."

"About how soon could I expect your nine to be ready? Of course you will require some time to prepare in?" asked the young captain.

"Ter-morrer at two," replied Shorty promptly.

"To-morrow at two?" Inquired Shanks, who had kept silence so far.

"To-morrow at two?" asked the young captain.

"Dat's der day an' hour," laughed our hero.

A few minutes later the young representative of the "Our Boys," of Louisville, took his departure.

"Shorty, old chum, I reckon that I kept my jaws padlocked about as close as if it was hermetically sealed while yer was chinnin' with that ball tosser; but now that he's lit out, lem'me ask you where in thunder are you going to get a baseball club in playing trim by to-morrow?" asked Shanks excitedly.

"Don't yer fret, Shanks. Go an' tell der fellers I want ter see dem out on der veranda."

The troupe were all in for the match as soon as Shorty informed them, and our little friend found no trouble in selecting eight players, some of whom had belonged at different times to the crack clubs of this country.

"Der nex' thing's 'bout a uniform, somethin' nobby, an' dat will be ready ter-morrer when der clock strikes noon. Le's go an' scoop in some of der big shops," said Shorty, leading the way down the main street and calling at each place of importance.

"You want the nine suits made of the best goods and according to that design, and to have them finished and delivered at the hotel by noon to-morrow?" asked a tailor, occupying a store on the opposite side of the street from the hotel.

"Zactly. Now, der question is, can yer jerk 'em through on time?"

"Etxra work like this always commands extra prices," hemmed the knight of the shears.

"Hang der prices! Ef yer can rig der crowd out in slam-bang style, an' on time, I won't squall when I pay der bill if 'tain't longer dan yer yardstick," said Shorty.

"That settles it; you shall have them on time, and made in style. Step this way for to leave your measures now" replied the tailor, flying around like a hen with a brood of chickens.

Leaving the tailor's, Shorty and his friend Shanks paid a flying visit to the offices of the Louisville "Journal" and "Democrat," and had them insert half a dozen prominent notices of the coming game. The job offices were put to work on posters, to be ready for the bill-stickers that night, announcing the great championship match.

"Come, fellers," said Shorty that afternoon, "let us walk out a w'la s a ' have a little practice game 'moagst ourselves, for I

don't propose ter let dat Our Boys' Club have such a soft snap on us as lots of fellers seem ter think dey will."

They succeeded in finding a good ground after a short walk, stepped off their ground, and in half an hour Shorty found that he had a nine that needn't take a back seat to anything that came along.

"Dat'll do for dis time. Now for supper an' der show, an' ter-morrer mornin' I want ter see all dis playin' crowd up an' ready ter pass der ball by five in der mornin' sharp," remarked our little friend as he paddled back to the hotel and examined some blisters in the palm of his hand.

There was a much larger house this evening than on the one previous. All the seats were occupied by a friendly crowd, who laughed at all their gags, applauded all their points and cheered their hits to the echo. Everything worked smoothly and nice, and a new song on baseball by Shorty brought down the house and sent that young gentleman off home in a good humor.

The practice game next morning gave the New Yorkers more confidence in themselves and each other, and they found they could pass a ball and make a double play just or nearly as fast as in their old ball-playing days.

"Now, yer can loaf around, but be at der hotel at noon. I'm goin' ter get der boss at der hotel ter hire me his stage an' four nags. Dat won't be slow, I reckon," said Shorty, and the boys made a general break for the hotel and breakfast.

The uniforms arrived on time, and the boys just looked nobby in them.

Punctual to the minute the stage, gayly decorated with flags and containing the New York Nine, dashed up to the Louisville ball grounds, where they were welcomed by Our Boys' Club and a clapping of hands and waving of handkerchiefs from a large audience, among which were many ladies, who had gathered to see the match.

After the selection of an umpire, the two captains tossed for choice of innings, and Shorty winning, the New Yorkers were sent to the positions in the field with a few whispered instructions, Shorty having decided to play shortstop.

"Oh, look, what a funny-looking player!" exclaimed a voice as the nine separated and Shorty was seen waddling down to his post as fast as his little duck legs would carry him.

Play was called a moment later, and the game commenced under considerable excitement, the ladies wagering gloves and perfumery and the gentlemen betting wine and cigars on its issue.

Our Boys' first striker batted a high ball, which was gobbled by the left field and passed back in style. Batsman No. 2 got his first on a daisy cutter, and was trying to steal his second when he was captured by a magnificent throw to second by Shanks, who was catching. No. 3 batted a ball in Shorty's direction, who picked it up and put it to first base in time to wind up the inning.

It was now the New Yorkers' turn at the bat, and Dave Reed led off by a first-base hit. Tambo followed with a corker to centre field that gave him his first and let Dave around to his second. Shanks took the stick and managed to drop the ball in a spot where it was safe till his long legs could carry him to first base. Things commenced to look a little exciting about this time, three men on bases and the chances of a double play looming up.

"Who's the next striker?"

"Whose turn is it next?"

"Everything depends on a good batter now."

"Pshaw! it's that little runt," remarked the crowd impatiently.

"Then that cooks their goose. They did have some show 'fore this," said a man as Shorty, after carefully selecting a bat, stepped forward, tossed down his cap, glanced confidently around and toed the plate.

"I'll bet any one of you' folks all you want to that that little rooster is the game bird in the field. Why, there's more pluck, push and confidence in his comical old face than there is in a dozen of the others," exclaimed an old gray-haired man, jumping up and hauling out a well-filled pocketbook.

Shorty, in the meantime, stood quietly and coolly waiting for a ball to suit him. It came at last, and slowly raising his bat as it came toward him, he swung his body to meet it, throwing at the same time all the strength and power of his muscular little body in the stroke, and the next moment that ball was soaring high over the heads of the fielders, while Shorty, with the fragments of a broken bat-handle in his hand was digging it around the bases like a little terrier, not stopping till he had put the climax on it by making a home run amidst such thunders of applause from the audience that he got up from where he had thrown himself on the grass and bowed his acknowledgment.

"By George! Shorty, that was an awful crack you hit that ball. Why, they say there never was a ball batted around here within fifty feet of yours," said Shanks.

"Well, yer see, I tumbled ter der crowd actin' sick when dey seen dat dey had a small feller ter pull yer out of der hole yer was in, an' I jess made up my mind ter soak dat ball, wid all der ugliness an' strength in dis carcass—yer savey?" explained Shorty, getting up to give some directions.

The game was a closely contested one, both clubs batting and fielding magnificently and keeping the scores down to almost nothing, till at the end of the ninth inning the score stood New York, 5; Our Boys, 4.

"Three cheers for the New York boys and their little home run captain," proposed some one in the crowd, and they were given with a will.

"An' now, fellers, I want yer ter giv' three times three an' an ol' New York tiger for der Our Boys' Club," exclaimed Shorty, climbing up on top of the stage and waving his hat.

That night, and every night in fact during the balance of their stay, the theatre was crowded long before the time of commencing, and hundreds were turned away from the doors for want of room. On the evening of the ball match the lower private boxes were occupied by the Our Boys' Club.

Every act was cheered to the echo, and when the audience could recognize some favorite player of the afternoon under his burnt cork the shouts and applause would be deafening, and he was safe to be called out again.

Shorty's figure gave him away before he had got his nose past the flies, and then such a cheering, shouting, applauding, yellin', and noise making never has been heard before or since in that quiet old city of Louisville.

It was an ovation, and the crowd who were so ready to jeer and hiss him, had he made a muff, now rose and cheered him till they were hoarse.

"Speech! Speech! Speech! S-p-e-e-c-h!" yelled the crowd from every part of the house, till Shorty, finding that there was no chance of his proceeding with his banjo solo, laid down the banjo tenderly, scratched his head, and, advancing a step, said:

"Dere, wite folkses. Ise as grateful for dis ovashun as a schoolboy for a second chunk of mince pie. We com' ter dis town strangers, even ter der police, an' yer hav' taken us by der flippers, led us out inter green pastures, an' nearly ker-walloped us out of our boots in a game dat, if we'd lost, why we'd hav' had ter wear veils over our purty faces so yer couldn't see us blush. Now if you'll jess keep so quiet dat yer can hear yer hair grow, I'll pick yer a few red-hot gushes on my little banjo."

Shorty's speech was received with a storm of applause, after which he went on with and finished his act. Altogether the show was voted a big thing, and when the curtain finally dropped the crowd were enthusiastic over their night's pleasure.

The New York Minstrels had a gay time during the rest of their stay in Louisville. Invitations to picnics, excursions, and pleasure parties fluttered in upon them by the score. Then there were horseback rides and boat races, horse races, shooting matches and hunting parties without number, till any stranger who could have dropped in and seen the long faces of the crowd as they packed their luggage the morning of their departure, would have thought he had fallen amongst a delegation of undertakers.

Shorty had surely been in luck since starting out with Shanks and the New York Minstrels, for it had been one round of full houses all the way from New York.

He had not been kicked into good luck this time, but had walked right into it on his own account and because of his being an all around good minstrel performer, singer, dancer, acrobat and pantomimist, to say nothing of his being able to play the banjo like an angel.

Another thing that brought in the money by the barrel was the fact of his having a first-class troupe of first-class specialists, a good manager and a rattling advance agent, but perhaps one of the prime factors of his success, and the biggest one, if we are not mistaken, was the way he got the show talked about in the papers.

Shorty's rackets did this, for newspapers always like to get hold of good stories, and as the papers always mentioned Shorty, he got a lot of good advertising out of his rackets, not to mention the fun, which was really all he was working for.

Shorty, with his New York Minstrels, has now left Louisville to continue his triumphal march across the country, rake in the shekels and have fun wherever he sees it, and so, having seen him fairly started on a career of prosperity, we will leave him, wishing him continued good luck.

[THE END.]

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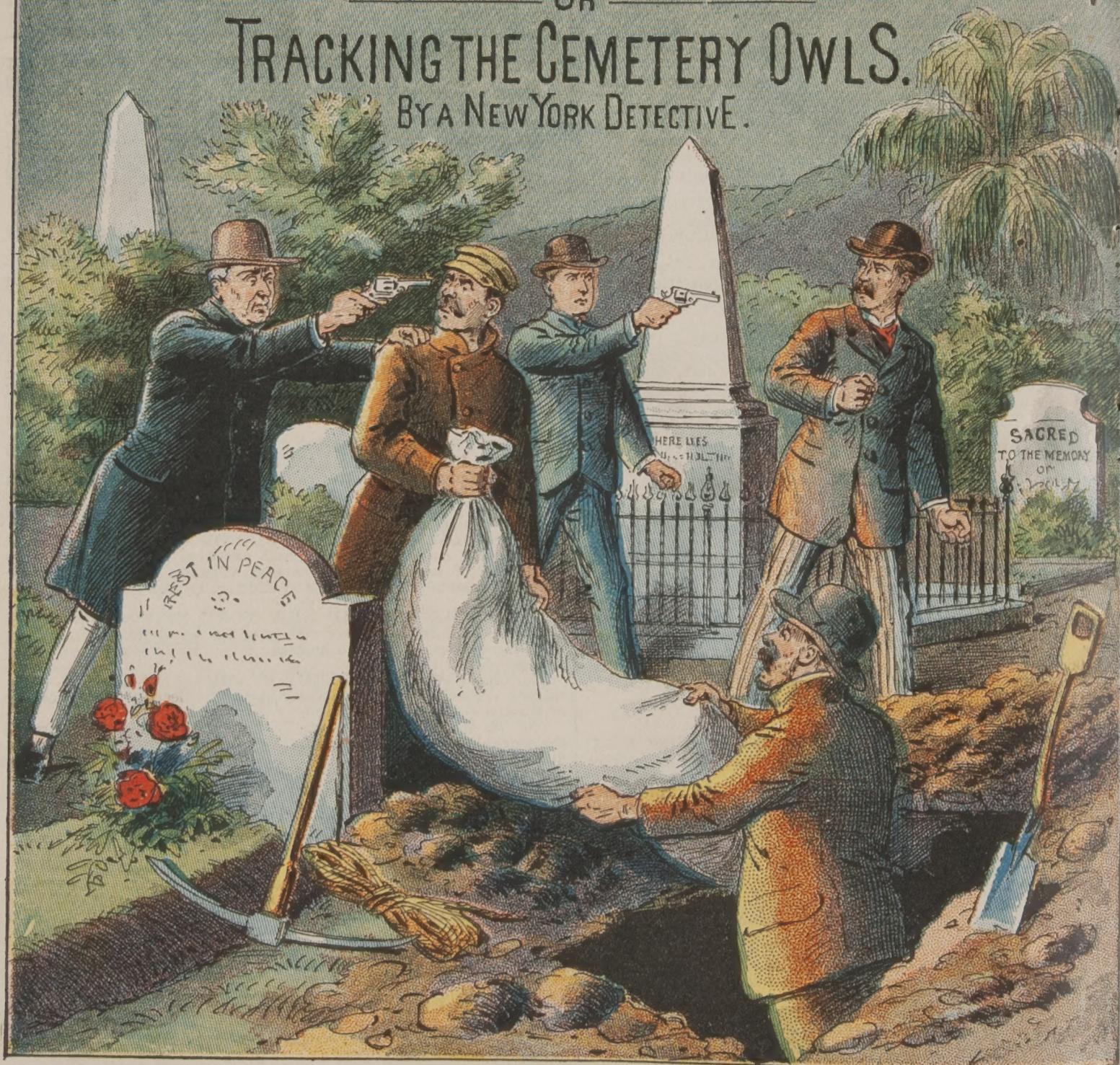
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